

THE
FORTUNE-TELLER.

IN
TWO VOLUMES.

If the World will, why let it be deceiv'd.

VOL. II.

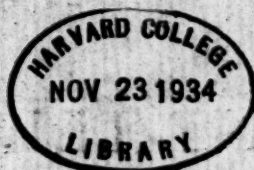
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CHAP. XV.

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THE

VERDICT, not want of inclination, that
 he had moved, but had been
 miles from town, to new quarters, and
 had been proposed from Paris to him
 of his mother's wishes; but that from
 the strong desire he had to satisfy
 him to take.

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You must have been a clever fellow,
 said he to some one on my heart
 had received, almost too late, than I did.

CHAP. I.

Curiosity and a hackney-coach bring new customers to the conjuror. The power of imagination. Youth and prosperity, how dangerous to their possessors.

SEVERAL days elapsed before I heard any thing of Mr. Molesworth, the young gentleman I had destined for Cordelia; but on his making me a visit, I found it had been want of con-

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venience, not want of inclination, that had prevented my seeing him. His father, he said, had unexpectedly hurried him a few miles from town, to shew him as an animal fresh imported from Paris, to some of his mother's relations; but that from the strong desire he had to gratify his curiosity, it appeared one of the most unreasonable steps he had ever desired him to take.

You must have been a clever fellow, said he, to know the impression my heart had received, almost sooner than I did myself; for though I unspeakably admired the young lady during the whole day, I had no suspicion that she would be the perpetual object of my contemplation. But come, let us proceed to business.

The lady, sir, who has made such an intire conquest of your affections (speaking somewhat loud, that my auxiliaries behind the wainscot might receive their clue)

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clue) is not yet two-and-twenty; her features are well suited to convey all those finer feelings of the soul that many claim, but few besides herself are endued with; and as you have a very benevolent disposition, there can be little doubt of your happiness. The stars are, indeed, continually brought into disreputation by the ignorant, the perverse, and the undistinguishing part of each sex, from disappointments in their matrimonial connexions, though the fault is all their own. For as the elements are irreconcilable, so are the opposite humours of the individual; and it should be the first care of every person to choose with probability, as a conformity of taste, of manners and of sentiments, is the only security for domestic satisfaction.

I never, said Mr. Molesworth, could have imagined that a philosopher and a conjuror would be synonymous terms, but I verily believe you are an exception to

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all rule; nay, more, if it was not for the apparatus that marks your character, I cannot help thinking that you possess as large a portion of the social as the sentimental, and that the world would be the better for your conversation. You have, however, little idea of the impatience of a lover, or you would not attempt to preach when you should practice for his gratification. But we will compromise the matter; shew me the lady, sir, and I will then chearfully attend the moral documents you may be inclined to bestow upon me, for our mutual advantage in life.

You shall, sir, be indulged: that glass is one of the most faithful mirrors your eyes ever encountered; it may, indeed, sometimes offend the sight, but it never once deceived; please to place yourself as I direct, and you will be no less forward than myself to proclaim its celebrity. I had now amused him, I was sensible, a
— suf-

sufficient time, and therefore ascending the chair with all proper solemnity, adapting my accents to the importance of the invocation, and rendering the whole scene; according to Bayes's maxims, at once elevating and surprising, my mother made her appearance, dressed nearly in the same clothes Cordelia wore when she made her visit of consultation. His fancy heated, no wonder his judgement lost its powers. He pronounced me the greatest and the kindest man on earth; gave me commission to draw his nativity at large; slipped a handsome fee into my hand, and quitted my closet in raptures.

On his retiring, a young woman, one of your vulgar beauties, was shewn in. I had scarcely thrown my eyes upon her, before I recollected to have seen her at my father's; but she crossed my hand with a liberality I was not prepared for, asked me twenty questions in a breath, and seemed so full of expectation, that I be-

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gan to discover the ground on which we must meet.

You live, said I, young woman, with a middle aged gentleman near the Royal-Exchange, whose wife has too much spirit to let her family pass their days in idleness. For your part, you have been strangely driven about by her. When in health, she puts the house in confusion; and when ill, which is often the case, harasses her servants to death. Your master's kindness, however, atones for all; he has made you many tender, many generous professions, and you are now come to enquire whether the stars have, or have not, allotted him for your husband. By diligently watching the turns of her countenance during this harangue, I was convinced I had not mistaken the case, and I dealt her out the most liberal portion of affluence and felicity. The creature's credulity kept pace with my promises: not a page in Euclid was ever more clearly demon-

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demonstrated, nor a divine revelation more implicitly believed. I wish, sir, I really wish my master would visit you; but he despises every thing of the kind, and says I am a fool for following such gentlemen as you; but all gentlemen who resolve questions have not the sense nor the learning nor the knowledge that you have, and I will do all in my power to recommend you, in return for your very great civility. These overflowings of gratitude, however seemingly unmeaning, were to me very flattering; for, forgetting that it is the timid not the hardened sinner that is within the reach of supernatural operations, I conceived some confused hopes respecting my father, and to give her as exalted an opinion as possible of my skill, I shewed her the object of her affections in the glass, the infatuation of her own mind sufficiently securing her faith, with only the trifling precaution of touching certain springs under the desk, so contrived as to point to instructions,

B 4

whether

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whether it was an old or young, a plain or gay man that must appear; and Mrs. Biddy, for that was the lady's name, went away thoroughly convinced she should marry her master.

A lovely young girl, just (it was apparent) arrived in town, with whom I was wholly unacquainted, now presented herself; I was therefore obliged to go dexterously to work; for though there was much simplicity, there was great good sense in her aspect.

You have, said I, madam, lately taken a very long journey, and, as you hope, a very happy one; but that circumstance will depend entirely on your own conduct. You, perhaps, have yet to learn, that the manners of good breeding and the manners of sincerity are widely opposite, and that consequently you must not imagine either men or things are what they appear to be in this new world. The ingenuity of the artist can give an exquisite polish
to

to false jewels, which nothing but the eye of judgement and experience can detect; your only security then will be to walk as if on ice, unless you walk under the auspices of some judicious friend; for to go no farther into the dangers you have to apprehend, you may be assured your youth and figure will be evermore exposing you to idle professions of admiration with the men, and unprovoked envy with the women. A gay young fellow, your relation, (you know best whether I am right) will endeavour to persuade you he is your lover, though in reality only amusing himself at your expence, and an elderly lady will give you much good advice, which you will do well to follow. You will not marry for some years, unless you marry very imprudently; for the man who alone can make you happy, is now at the East-Indies, and will not return to England for some time. Have I ever heard of this gentleman, sir, said she, or is he an entire stranger to me and my family? An

entire stranger, replied I; but if I was sure your spirits were strong enough to bear the surprize, that you may know him when you meet him hereafter, I would shew you his person in that glafs. I was obliged to employ my whole stock of rhetoric to remove her doubts, obviate her objections, and reconcile her principles to what I proposed. While she remained an infidel she smiled somewhat indignantly upon me; when she was only half inclined to consent, she proposed me several puzzling questions; but so soon as her imagination caught the contagion I wished to communicate, she shuddered at her own temerity, and beheld me with a kind of religious horror. However, as a proof that ladies are very poor casuists, and that to deliberate, as one of our poets tells us, is to be lost, I so managed her feelings and her apprehensions, that she ventured to behold the face of her intended lover, and, I dare believe, retained the impression as long as she lived.

I had,

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I had, it is true, my compunctions on the occasion. What misery, thought I, may I be now preparing for this innocent, this frail young woman! but what could I do? I was therefore compelled to seek consolation in the recollection of the good understanding she was mistress of, and the pious education it was evident she had received, and flattered myself, that by their joint assistance she would soon most heartily despise both me and my predictions. I had her traced home, as was in general our custom, in order to be prepared on a second visit, but in a few months afterwards I learned that she had escaped from a bad world by the malignity of a fever, a circumstance that as I had not been able to foresee, it had not been in my power to foretell.

C H A P. II.

*A sermon. The conjuror in good humour.
A whimsical experiment.*

THE next morning a girl of fifteen was one of my first customers, who, with a face of care and anxious expectation, intreated I would cast the nativity of a young fellow her relation.

I believe, young lady, said I, this is not the only visit you have honoured me with. She answered in the negative, and owned that I had told her so many extraordinary things one afternoon, when a friend of her's brought her to visit me, that she was desirous of knowing what I would say respecting the prospects of the person whose name she had given me. Madam, replied I, after due forms had been observed, there is something very peculiar in this gentleman's destiny. He has

has experienced, though now little more than four-and-twenty, as great a flow of prosperity and inundation of adversity as is generally cast in the whole existence of an individual; but depressed as he is at present, be assured there is a rise in store for him both with regard to his reputation and fortune.

Alas! said she, greatly affected, all you have said of the past is literally true; may Heaven in mercy fulfil what you promise in future! But, sir, as you seem so perfectly acquainted with human events, I should suppose the human heart lies open before you. Will you then tell me how it comes to pass that misfortunes produce such changes in the best hearts; for though the accomplishments and the virtues are still the same, who approves the poor man, or enters into the chain of unfavourable turns by which he is undone? The young fellow I came to enquire about, only one month ago was the

the darling of his acquaintance ; his good nature was the source of a thousand useful actions ; his good humour of as many pleasing ones. Message upon message, and invitation on invitation were eternally awaiting on him, until the true state of his affairs could be no longer concealed ; when those who had most eagerly courted his company, and had been most forward in professions of friendship, became instantly judges and censurers on his conduct ; observed, that as every one knew their own affairs best, it was their duty to regulate their expences by their circumstances, and not from a ridiculous affectation of taste and gentility, run into extravagancies which no one had a right to condemn, until it was notorious how unbecomming their situation. In short, continued she, the tears streaming down her cheeks, but one of all my brother's numerous companions has remained firm, and even his brow is occasionally contracted. He has indeed done him many
good

good offices, but he does them not as from friend to friend ; for then every appearance of superiority would cease, whether of prudence or of providential advantages.

Young as you are, madam, said I, it is far from extraordinary that the operations of little minds should surprize and afflict you, but the narrow sentiments which break out in our conduct are imbibed at a very early period. The follies of mankind, from custom, are, as it were, sanctified by their possessions ; yet, perhaps, we do great violence to our conformity thereto, because our own merits are not only unacknowledged, but must be unclaimed by us ; and hence it is that we rejoice on finding ourselves released from constraint, and that this creature whose understanding is in reality of a common size, but whose vanity was capable of looking down on us with contempt, is stripped of all its assumed importance, and

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and proved to be a heap of indiscretion and absurdity, and can that give pleasure to a rational or benevolent mind? Why, madam, it is certain, as the poet tells us, that even the best of us are by turns what we despise; can we then wonder that ordinary minds should be inconsistent? Yet learn to distinguish one passion from another: we should pity the individual, if his distresses did not furnish us with a triumph. When we are supposed to be happy in our circumstances, we possess a kind of privilege to speak our sentiments freely; and as we are too apt to confine our view to the present moment, this freedom is often carried to licentiousness, and it is that our competition, our prejudices, our peculiarities, and our oppositions are in one poor hour recollected as so many charges against us, that we are supposed to deserve the punishment we have incurred. The name of friendship seems, I grant you, to promise something beyond laughing with us in our prosperity or accepting

cepting our services; but friendship, though warmly professed, is little understood, and still less felt by the generality of mankind, and when merely a similarity of humour, fortune, or situation has formed the connexion, what can be more natural, than that an alteration in any one of those great essentials should finally destroy it?

I was sorry it was necessary for the advantage of this truly amiable girl, to undermine all the fair castles her goodness of heart and inexperience had erected; but to be honest I was compelled to be cruel, and I sent her away weeping the depravity and the insensibility of our natures. In order, however, to complete the friendly work I had begun, I foretold, before we parted, the commencement of an acquaintance; a prediction I took care should soon be fulfilled between her and my mother, and have the pleasure of knowing that she benefited by my kindness much more than I choose to express.

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Three boarding-school girls, attended by one of the teachers, as it was now holiday-time, were shewn into the dining-room. I was shocked at the information; for if it was education that formed the tender mind, I could not but apprehend that these poor things were greatly out of the road for becoming prudent wives, valuable matrons, or useful members of society.

One of the misses, who, I suppose, was barely fourteen, begged me to tell her when she should be married. I affected to wrap myself up in meditation for some time, in order that what I intended to say to her might have more weight, and then assured her, that if she changed her condition on this side five-and-twenty, she would be the veriest wretch in the creation. She changed colour; and pray, sir, why?

Because, replied I, the person you have now an idea of, so far from being either a man of honour or a gentleman, that he
is

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is an arrant tharper, and has not a view beyond stripping you of your fortune and abandoning you. For this purpose (and let your own heart bear free testimony) he flatters your vanity instead of seeking to engage your esteem; and in order the more effectually to prevent your discovering him to be a worthless fellow, endeavours to persuade you you are an angel. You have now a letter about you (I perceived the corner of one as she drew her pocket-handkerchief from her pocket) full of the tenderest professions; and yet, believe me, unless he hoped your relations would buy him a commission, and put him in possession of a cool five hundred or so, he would never wish to see you more.

It is impossible, cried she, nor will I credit even the stars when speaking to his disadvantage; and so, sir, you need give yourself no farther trouble.

Hold, said I, miss, (for she was flouncing out of the closet) one word more with you;
if

if you have not the good sense to be your own protector on such fair warning, know, these stars you despise have ordained that your relations shall be roused from their lethargy, and so I caution you to beware. Besides, continued I, however you may be disposed to frown on me, I will perform the duties of my office. The man that means a young lady honourably has too much respect for her to treat her like a fool, and, in proportion to the affection he feels for her, abhors treating her with insincerity. Can you deny that these are very unlike the features of your lover's character? or, without a breach of veracity, tell me, that the letters he sends you are not filled with bombast and overstrained compliments. You will suffer for your incredulity, and, when it is too late, remember me.

I gave a hint to one of my myrmidons to follow the froward damsel home, and bring me no less speedy than certain intelligence concerning her.

The

The teacher was now introduced. She was a shrewd, but a good natured looking young woman, and I resolved to try what could be done to intimidate and reclaim her; for I could not doubt, as she was the young lady's companion in this pious and wise expedition, she must be her confidante in the whole affair.

Madam, said I, after having pored a long time over the books I had before me, there is some great disgrace in store for you. She started involuntarily, but it was not my business to appear sensible of it. You are, I perceive, concerned in a business that you hope will be advantageous to you; but discard the flattering idea, for it will prove quite the contrary—unless, indeed—let me see—let me see, unless you was to change hands, and act an honest instead of a dishonest part.

You stand on a precipice, continued I, (for she was sullen, and I could draw nothing out of her) it is now, indeed, in
your

your power to carve your destiny ; but if you advance (I would not wish to alarm you) but if you advance one step farther, scorn, contempt, and the loss of a maintenance will be your portion. If I looked into things as you do, with only common eyes, my sight would be limited as yours is, by momentary benefits ; but it is not I that speak to you ; it is your guardian angel, your fate, therefore fly the impending evil while it is yet in your power. She left me in great discomposure, though without deigning to honour me with a single syllable ; but I could perceive penitence and resolutions of amendment in her countenance : nor was I mistaken, for, on enquiry, the young lady remained single for many years after. The teacher, terrified by my threats, immediately gave the father and mother intimation of the snare she had been aiding and assisting in spreading for their daughter ; and, instead of the destroyer, became the deliverer of her young friend. But these circumstances

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did not reach my knowledge till a distant period, when miss herself re-visited me, and, in the course of her consultation, thanked the stars for interposing between her and irreparable destruction.

The two other girls were soon dispatched; the trite tale, that they would experience a change of situation, take a journey, narrowly escape severe perils, and meet with husbands in due season, being sufficient to send them away perfectly satisfied.

CHAP.

C H A P. III.

A groupe of heterogeneous characters. Much parade, little business, and less entertainment to the reader.

A Pleasant set of customers with whom we were in constant pay, were politicians, quack-doctors, itinerant shew-men, and perfumers; from these gentlemen we received hints, which, at the same time that they put money into our pockets, promulgated their fame, and enhanced their reputation in the highest degree. We likewise foretold the fall and rise of stocks, or, in other words, the fortunate moments in the alley, and were peculiarly happy in pointing out to place-hunters the vacancies, and the periods of application, so essential in their affairs. Perhaps, indeed, to confess the truth, in order to render our office the most innocent, we rendered it the most busy scene imaginable. If a visitor appeared

appeared with any symptoms of disease, we immediately amused them with a speedy cure by an unexpected rencounter with some of our physical friends, who had made their disease for numberless years their particular study. Hope and credulity are the almost infallible inhabitants in the bosom of your valetudinarians; we have therefore had abundant-success this way; the old have looked forward to the recovery of their lost faculties, middle-aged ladies to a restoration of their bloom, and as the fancy is every thing on all these occasions, if no real benefit was obtained, no actual miracle wrought, the mind was kept in pleasing expectation, and the wish, by continued indulgence, converted into actual faith and belief.

Surprising soever as this may seem to the unreflecting and the unexperienced, a very limited acquaintance with the human heart is sufficient to give us a tolerable idea of its folly. The sincere man is

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seldom a welcome guest: if we enquire how we look, it is in order to be told agreeable things; and if we disclaim any little merits, it is most apparent that we are far from offended at rough or flat contradictions; a specimen or two of which my master presented me with in the course of his attendance, nor were the testimonies few that fell within my own immediate cognizance.

A lady who was farther turned of forty than even her own heart durst whisper to her, paid us a visit. She was much indisposed, had tender spirits, very uncommon resignation, and in short, had bid so final an adieu to the follies of life, nay, to life itself, that she only wished to be informed how near or remote her hour of dissolution. My master happened to be on duty, though a volunteer, for I was then in full possession of the general emoluments. He cast a keen glance at her whilst she was telling the story of her infirmities,

firmities, and her self-devotion to the will of Heaven; but the intelligence her eyes gave him was so diametrically opposite to that of her lips, that he was not long at a loss in what manner to treat her. I cannot wonder, said he, that the suffering individual should be weary of existence. But, madam, desperation and hopelessness are alone suitable companions. Your constitution is tender, not decayed; your health interrupted, not destroyed; and I am confident that a very little resolution and judicious recipes would restore all the graces of vivacity and the tints of salubrity to your countenance; nay more, notwithstanding the present depression of your spirits, the power of doing mischief would no sooner be re-obtained, than the inclination would revive in your heart, nor would you feel the least compunction for the evils you occasioned. The lady could not conceal the satisfaction these words communicated; they were a kind of cordial drop for which her soul had

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languished ; for so much had envy tainted her disposition, and the hand of time obliterated her personal charms, that no incense of the sort had been offered up to her, for several preceding years. But she nevertheless thought it incumbent upon her, from the double motive of prolonging the oracular feast and appearing a miracle of humility, to object to all my master said. Her person at the best could never boast any wonderful obligations to nature ; nor had she an atom of tyranny in her whole composition. My master's reply was quite in point ; and he proceeded to inform her, that the re-assumption of her attractions was not very distant ; for that either at the end of the half-expired week in which she had favoured him with that visit, or in the beginning of the ensuing one, accident would throw her into the way of a gentleman whose physical knowledge was astonishing ; that after some trifling exchanges on indifferent subjects, her ill health would be by some means

means mentioned, whereupon a regimen would be prescribed by him, which would possess all the uses of cosmetics, and the sanative qualities of medicine; and that nothing but perseverance on her part, would be necessary to render her anew a divine creature. The lady was liberal in her reward for such grateful intelligences, and went away with a delighted, though I cannot say, a delightful aspect; for her features were of that peculiar cast as are forbidden the communication of rapturous sensations, and her complexion of that unvarying hue, from which not the remotest ray of light can be gathered respecting the mental operations. The gentleman destined to fulfil our predictions received his instructions accordingly. His figure was prepossessing, his volubility captivating, and his manners insinuating. Seated at the top of the Park, from our description he discovered his game. He advanced with ease, with dignity, with politeness, with sociality; his voice was

C 3

pleasing,

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pleasing, his address commendatory ; room was made for him, and a dish of chat was the consequence. The lady recollected the Fortune-teller, but had the ill-nature to resolve that the stars should do their own business ; for not a word should escape her either directly or indirectly, that could be assisting. The stars however despised the little trick, and proved to her that destiny is not to be averted by caprice, or suspended by human policy.

The Park was full of company ; Dr. Smart talked familiar of the whole moving picture with which they were presented. These were cits ; those gamblers ; these women of fashion ; and those your half-formed gentlewomen, whose origin was as obscure as their means of subsistence was mysterious. A little groupe passed by : Did you observe that fine tall woman on the right hand ? demanded the doctor. The ladies had observed her. You see
how

how very florid her complexion, how sparkling her eye, how sprightly her mien; and yet, ladies, I can assure you, it is not above three months since I beheld her in the most dreadfully emaciated state, and given over by all the faculty. I was the fortunate means, added he, pulling down his laced ruffles with modest negligence, of restoring her to her health and beauty.

You are then a physician, I presume, sir, said one of the ladies. I am, madam, but not a domestic bred one. It is not merely a college education, or the practice of our English hospitals to which I am indebted for my knowledge; for I have travelled the continent to its utmost verge, conversed with every learned man in Europe, attended botanical experiments wherever they have been exhibited, and seen all the various improvements in anatomy, until the human frame, with all its constituent parts, is as familiar to me as my alphabet. But I beg your pardon, ladies,

for stumbling on so *mal-à-propos* a subject; but I own I have not patience with the things that in this country are called physicians, who, instead of varying their prescriptions according to the stages, the symptoms of the distemper, treat a dozen patients alike, because there may be some small similarity in their complaints.

You would not make an apology for what you have said, sir, replied my master's visitant, if you had any idea how greatly part of your audience, at least, are interested in physical matters; and indeed it now strikes me that there is infinite justice in your observation, that the constitution, and the turns of the distemper ought to be the grand regulators of all medical practice. I will tell you, madam, said the doctor: soon after my arrival from Italy, two ladies applied to me for my advice; the one apprehended herself in a consumption, and the other a confirmed leper, when the fact was, that the
first

first had somewhat delicate nerves, and the second a slight scorbutic disorder. I undertook, and I effected their cure in a few weeks, and they are now, perhaps, two of the finest women in this country. Pray, sir, said one of the ladies, may we beg your address? Dr. Smart, in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields: and looking on his watch, he recollected an appointment, lamented the necessity that drew him from such agreeable company, made a bow, and walked to Buckingham-Gate, where he observed his carriage had waited some time. The ladies, there is no doubt, were vociferous in praise of the well-bred doctor; and Mrs. Staples, for that was the lady's name on whose account the meeting had been planned, felt herself so affected by the circumstances, that, to speak in the language of two-thirds of the community, she up and told them the story of her visit to our office, with additions and amendments, as they were pleased to suggest themselves. Mrs. Staples was so impatient to try the doctor's

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medicines, that the very next morning brought her to his house. He pronounced with certainty on her case, and confirmed all that my master had promised of her renovated youth and renovated charms.

The lady was no less implicit in her obedience to his directions than indefatigable in swallowing all the draughts he sent her; but still her looking-glass was in vain consulted for the pleasing change it was to reflect. The doctor flattered, the lady hoped; but she had, in spite of all her folly, a gleam of sense that made it impossible for her to see the thing that was not. The doctor therefore presented her with the first Circassian handkerchief ever brought into this country, for the purpose of fulfilling her dearest hopes, which, by being only slightly brushed over the face, rendered her every thing, but the likeness of flesh and blood, that could be desired. The women censured and the men laughed; but the one was open, the other
was

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was secret; and as our sex always consider this hanging out of false colours as an invitation of flattery and adulation, they amused themselves by acting accordingly, and the imaginary angel was the contemptible 'dupe. Fashion and custom are the strongest of all infatuations; the ladies, unable to penetrate the motives, from perceiving the compliments Mrs. Staples had paid her, began from despising to wish themselves possessed of her recommendatory arts. Mrs. Staples was no churl when properly applied to, and the Circassian handkerchief was soon in the highest repute, to the great disgust of all the sensible part of mankind, and offence of liberal minded women, who know that it is not a set of features or complexion, when even the bounty of nature, that are sufficient to fix a valuable heart, or give their possessor permanent consequence.

In matters of politics we had a new road to pursue. The general division in

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every country is the persons who oppose, and who promote the interests of government. When a session of parliament was therefore opened, we were consulted as to the business that would or would not be brought on the tapis. The question on these occasions, where an administration is really endued with wisdom, and have actual meaning in their schemes and conduct, must have been critical and puzzling; but when a set of men are in power whose only spring of action is self-interest, and whose only view imposing upon the multitude, it was merely taking the trouble to weigh the point in hand in the proper scale, to be able to ascertain their determination. It would fill a volume to do justice to our sagacity and celebrate our discernment in all government resolves, as well as revive many heart-burnings in this kingdom. I shall therefore leave it to the ingenious reader's own imagination to supply this hiatus in my history, only confessing by the by that a few hundreds of
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the t—r—y money did not disdain to circulate itself from the Fortune-teller's office, as a reward for services received, and serviceable expectances, such as preparing, soothing, &c. &c. the minds of the populace, by giving the grossest national blunders the sanctifying name of the decrees of fate.

Puppet-shews, wild-beasts, dwarfs and Patagonians, were all rendered by our art so many useful assemblies. It was there that young men and young women were destined to encounter their sweethearts; and it was there that many singular connexions were destined to be formed, though this indeed was the ground least occupied by us of all others, from being the beaten track of every garreteer oracle within the bills of mortality.

As to our friends the perfumers, we contrived to promote their interest by the simplest means imaginable. Bills, setting forth the innocence and the efficacy of their
their

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their cosmetics, were as accidentally dropped in the passage or on the stairs; and if any notice was taken of them, we observed that different nations had different customs, for that whatever disreputation washing might be held in in England, the French ladies considered it as neither a disparagement of their understanding or their principles, to give nature every possible assistance; and that it was well known how advantageous an agreeable bloom was to even the finest eyes, and how unspeakably it improved the vivacity of every countenance.

As to the affairs of the alley, my master happened to have a relation who was a broker, and as we had the address to throw much business in his way, he thought it well worth his while to give us intelligence. The mistress of a noble lord, who was much too great a favourite to be excluded from his confidence in the most important matters, by an occasional present conveyed
many

many happy hints to him, which we no less happily played off on the public in general; besides several other resources which a golden key obtained for us, though not altogether so safe to mention. We ourselves were accustomed to speculation under the auspices of our friend, but had much too large a share of prudence to venture out of our road, so that we contrived to bid fair for improving, without once endangering our fortune. I never durst, however, make my personal appearance in or about 'Change, for fear of meeting my father; for such were the formidable impressions I had imbibed, that I conceived him the most dangerous of enemies, nor can I doubt but his treatment of me will justify me in the reader's opinion, when he recollects all the sufferings his want of parental feelings brought upon me.

A little sort of alarm now reached me of a very uncommon nature. My master
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professed such great approbation of my mother as was scarce compatible with common friendship, and seemed to threaten a much more tender attachment. My mother's principles and resolutions could not well be doubted; but my master was so great an adept in the arts of pleasing, that I trembled lest her compassion should be interested, or that a too abrupt refusal, without giving him the particulars of our histories, might offend him, and bring us into many inconveniencies. My mother, whose life was without design, professed herself much delighted with his conversation. She knew books; he knew the human heart, and there was a vein of pleasantry in his composition that gave liveliness and grace to all his descriptions. My mother laughed at me when I mentioned the discovery I was convinced I had made of his growing inclination for her. My good child, said she, do learn to distinguish between the susceptibilities of youth and those of a more advanced period.

period. Mr. Robinson is pleased with my enquiring spirit, and I am entertained with his abundant knowledge; but I am satisfied that our favourable ideas of each other never went beyond; and notwithstanding your suspicions have flown out on this occasion, you may remember the brotherly affection you bore Cordelia Berkeley, though she was by no means the woman you would have chosen for a wife. Besides, you don't recollect that your master, whatever his private sentiments might be, is under a predicament that must for ever restrain him from every matrimonial overture. A vow of celibacy of the most solemn kind has been taken by him, and you well know how I am situated; for however the laws of this country may release me from the sacred tie, I can never conceive any human power can dissolve it. I assured my mother in terms equally strong and sincere, that it was not her integrity I doubted, but my master's prudence and resolution; and that a quarrel
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with our benefactor could not be an eligible circumstance, let the prospect be ever so remote. But very soon after this conversation I had the satisfaction to find that my mother's conjectures were just, mine altogether idle and groundless; for Mr. Robinson, instead of seeking to spend his life with her, was making a purchase of a little snug box thirty-six miles from London, where he proposed passing by much the largest portion of his time in retirement and meditation. My mother read me a little lecture on my too quick apprehensions, observing that it would be extremely hard to deny a sociable mind the pleasures of sociality, because it was within possibility that the character of the friend might insensibly be converted into that of the lover. That it was certainly a very natural circumstance, where two persons of different sexes had frequent opportunities of conversing together, and were conscious of no impediment, for them at length to be inclined to pass their lives under

under the same roof; but where impediments did subsist on either, or perhaps, on both sides, there was ample security for the propriety of the attachment. Friendship, she continued, was a generous, a benevolent sentiment, and never yet inhabited an unworthy bosom; for it was founded on esteem, on approbation, on apparent merit in the object, the claims to which could be no sooner forfeited than the principles must be extinguished. I confessed the justice of her observations, but was still for insisting upon it, that there was danger in all intimacies between men and women who could not be legally united. She cast a look of anger and contempt upon me; told me my soul was an illiberal one; and asked me whether I conceived it the scheme of Providence, or the depravity of the age, that required this separation, this unnatural reserve amongst those that were declaredly created to be the companions, the friends, the brothers and the sisters of each other. I shrunk
into

into myself, heartily begged her pardon, and, on a very little reflection, discarded the narrow idea for ever; for, agreeable to her tenet, where the mind is right, the conduct can never be wrong.

C H A P. IV.

A word to the wife of each sex.

A LADY who had somewhat unhappily distinguished herself in her neighbourhood by a jealous disposition, paid us a visit. It was, however, the goodness, not the malignity of heart, that betrayed her into the error, for she conceived that Heaven would severely punish the sins of the adulterer, nay, visit them on the head of his innocent posterity. From this motive, and from this alone, was she everlastingly entertaining her husband on the ungrateful subject, denouncing vengeance from on high, at the same time that she was very liberal in personal accusation.

fation. The husband, who was a lively good-natured man, was at first greatly distressed to see his wife unhappy; and assured her that all those little fallies that brought his faith in question, were perfectly innocent, and only a way he had got, which, as it gave her pain, he would endeavour by degrees to leave off; but he should be unwilling to do it abruptly, lest he should be smoked by his acquaintance for a hen-pecked husband. There was much reason in this; but the truth is, that ladies, however highly they may be offended when we call their rationality in question, are often wholly disinclined to hear reason. She insisted upon an instantaneous reformation: he, with much good humour, endeavoured to convince her she was too hard upon him; and, in the end, finding her so unrelenting, he began to despise her power, and resolved to have no other rule of conduct than his own inclination.

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This was a cruel as well as a mortifying discovery to a woman who really loved her husband, and rather piqued herself upon her address; but there was no remedy; her tears flowed in abundance; her complaints were perpetually wounding his ear; and instead of the domestic turn he had possessed, his home was the only place he visited with reluctance, and quitted without regret.

My master beheld this young agreeable and unhappily mistaken woman with compassion, and was particularly sorry to behold her a visitor at his office. Her wishes, indeed, could not be concealed; for if she had not been heartily tired of her present condition, she could never have been tempted to enquire into future changes and vicissitudes.

Madam, said my master, having taken the usual methods of informing himself, your fire-side is by no means a comfortable one; but as all its uneasiness results
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from you, it is in your power wholly to obviate it. She looked displeased. And pray, sir, how have I contrived to render myself the bane of felicity to my family? From prejudice of education. Without much vivacity in your own composition, you are hurt by its operations in another; and because you disapprove of livelinesses with other womens husbands, are offended that your husband should like to laugh with the wives of his acquaintance; but, believe me, you are quite wrong. Jealousy in a man is absurd, and for this reason; that no good woman can be the object of it, and a bad one should excite very different sensations. But in a woman jealousy is contemptible; for so long as the world's opinions and customs are what we of this generation find them, what is highly criminal in the one sex, will always be considered as venial in the other. Nor is there either injustice or hardship in the matter, if we recollect the different effects produced. Let the manners of a husband
be

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be ever so profligate, they are so far from reflecting dishonour on a wife, that they only place her virtue in a more conspicuous point of view, and aggravate the runagate's offences. The husband can bring no spurious offspring to commit legal depredations on his family, nor bring a worse calamity on their heads than a diminution of his circumstances, an evil that a prudent wife can in a great measure mitigate. And what is an unspeakable advantage, after having wandered ever so wide from the path of propriety, the moment that he conceives a just abhorrence of the vicious, and a just esteem for the virtuous, his wife by receiving him back, and generously forgiving and forgetting the past, does honour to her own heart, by doing her duty to herself, her husband, and society.

I confess it must not be a very pleasing thing to a woman of sensibility and tenderness to be disregarded by her husband ;
but

but it is her own fault if it is of any continuance. The uncomplaining sufferer has a triumph for an atonement, and is held forth to the world as a bright example of wisdom and virtue, at the same time that she is pronounced the saviour of her family. The infidelity of a wife operates widely different ; shame and destruction await her first departure from what is right, and mark her footsteps through the whole scene of infamy. The man for whose sake she betrays her family, despises her ; the innocent children that were born even before her defection, are branded with a cruel portion of her ignominy, and the finger of scorn is pointed against the husband, whose honour and whose dearest possessions have been torn from him by the depravity of her whom he believed to be little less than an angel. No contrition can here be of use ; the tears of absolute penitence, with respect to this world, must flow in vain ; for as there is no recalling past actions, so there can be no reunion with a polluted, an unfaithful wife.

Yet notwithstanding this is a true state of the case on each side, we have women so violent and so injudicious as to fly out beyond all possibility of retreat on their husband's misconduct, and here and there a few reptiles that have taken back the prostitute to their arms. It is, however, out of our power to teach the mind to feel, though we can correct the false judgements of mankind. Opinion is one thing, facts, another; but surely nothing but the most infernal turn of soul could suggest the idea of reprisals to the wife, or the abject nature consent to join hands with infamy.

But, madam, to come nearer the case in question: Your husband's affection for you is only suspended, not destroyed. He is offended, not disgusted with your behaviour, and therefore you may take my word for it, that if you can so far sacrifice your pride as to profess yourself sorry for the past, and instead of reproaches, meet him with kindness in future, you will be a
happy

happy woman. The lady, with a truly feminine spirit, was for justifying; but my master assured her she had no other alternative than becoming a reasonable or a miserable woman; the former of which was at length her election, and she even thanked my master for proving to her that she had acted an equally ridiculous and contemptible part.

A smart young damsel was now ushered in. She was on the point of embarking for the East-Indies, and wanted to learn what mighty things the stars meant to do for her.

My master happened to be in a moral humour, and told her that the treasures of a Nabob could not, if she had any sensibility, secure her from her own reproaches. In a word, madam, said he, there is a circumstance of your life, that however it may be concealed from the knowledge of the world, will, when you least expect, rise up against you; for you

well know you ought to be the wife only of your late father's clerk, by whom you have suffered yourself to be seduced. She reddened with resentment not compunction, besought my master not to offend her ear by such gross insinuations, but look forward and tell her what she had to hope or fear. I will, said he, be very candid with you; if you can reconcile yourself to the business of deceiving, you will not be unsuccessful. But however abundant your husband's circumstances, your extravagant and ambitious wishes will be always exposing you to his displeasure and your own private mortification; add to which, that you will live in perpetual apprehension of being betrayed; for though the gentlemen abroad are under the necessity of trusting great lengths, yet they are the most impatient of men if they discover themselves to be abused. The lady was not a little displeased by this unfavourable account of her prospects; but having received a re-assurance that she

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she should not only obtain a husband, but a very elegant establishment in consequence of her intended voyage, she seemed to conceive it very possible to silence the whisperings of conscience. And thus it is, said my master, that the world is deceived. The East-India Company have young women recommended to them as women of honour, though boldly enterprising, and they are implicitly credulous. Wives are wished for on the eastern continent; and relying upon the credentials of a society who are not within possibility of certain intelligence, the worthless and the vicious have an equal chance of success with the prudent and the amiable, who are induced to quit their country, not as adventurers, but from the ties of friendship or consanguinity, to live with those whose station is in foreign climates.

My master in the earlier parts of his life had been a great traveller; and amongst the manifold spots he had visited, India

was one. He confessed indeed, that the girl who had the courage to undertake so long a voyage deserved some little recompence, not to say a word of the dangers and inconveniencies to which she must stand exposed from the very nature of her situation ; but then, as in the army as well as civil employments, there were many men of nice honour and worthy characters, it was his opinion that they ought not to have agreeable creatures thrown in their way who were in reality objects of contempt. However, to reform the age was too formidable a task for a single individual to engage in, and he therefore was accustomed to conclude in the words of my motto, which would occur to him on numberless occasions : “ If the world will, “ why let it be deceived.”

It is a whimsical circumstance, said my master, that this same love and matrimony should be such an everlasting fund of profit to us. Young men and young women are
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so impatient to be disposed of, that they will anticipate their destiny; and, after having for a few years experienced the perplexities and the distresses of this so much admired state, are as eager to enquire about their dis-union, as ever they were of their union to a favourite object. But these changes are easily accounted for. In the earlier part of our lives folly and vanity are apt to divide our hearts; and as matrimony is the general fashion of the times, if we exclude the superior walks of life, where intrigue engrosses the whole attention, it is merely natural that choosing or refusing should be the great question of each sex at all periods, and on all occasions.

Having thus fixed without meaning and selected without judgement, can it be wonderful that repentance should follow close at their heels? The man becomes a tyrant, the woman a bosom enemy, and for a time all is concealed enmity and half sup-

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pressed discord. No sooner, however, has some unexpected incident brought on an eclairsissement, than hard words and bitter reproaches are the consequence; the husband flies to the tavern, and the wife for a time weeps in silence. Coming at length to examine into the merits of the matter, she finds her husband a churl, and herself a cruel provoked woman. She seeks a confidante of her sorrows, who having run through all the meanders herself, encourages her to look forward to better days. A husband may be lost as well as gained; and who would be such a fool as to spoil their eyes and destroy their agreeable looks for any ill-natured fellow in Christendom! The advice works its effect; the lady rests her hopes of amusement on intervals when she can feel herself her own mistress; and having weaned her mind by almost imperceptible gradations from her own family, extends her view without a single compunction a step or two farther, and has her second husband marked down

down long before it is convenient to bury her first.

Nor is the girlish period half so advantageous to us as this latter season, for girls are shy and timid; but when once the matron has burst the bonds of chaste reserve, and broke down the strong holds of honest prudence, there is no end to her idle, her unwarrantable curiosity. We are again consulted as new whims and new wishes arise, and our prediction still followed with more avidity in the last interview than the first.

But though my master had a propensity to moralize, and had his secret compunctions whenever he was the cause of distress or inconvenience to any one, yet he would indulge himself in a harmless laugh by winding and turning the mind about that was so weak as to put itself in his power.

Many a match has he brought to bear by the simple means of a masquerade-

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ticker, and sent shepherds and shepherdesses abroad in quest of each other, that must have disgraced every period but the antediluvian, when there were girls of fifty in absolute leading-strings, and boys of fourscore, who durst not be trusted by their parents beyond the smoke of their own chimnies but with a proper guard.

But it was not sufficient either for our amusement or our profit to put the idle and the infatuated on these noon-day absurdities, for we constantly contrived to be spectators of the scene. Strephons and Delias, as if by a secret magic, have selected each other from the multitude; sultanas have had devils at their feet, well qualified to tempt them from the right path; and the nuns of every order have instinctively, as it were, attached themselves to harlequins and Don Quixotes, by the mere power of a talisman with which we presented them.

The

The fact in reality was this: in all connexions it is an infallible principle of dealing, Do you serve me, and I will serve you. If we then sent customers to the several warehouses in the purlieus of the garden, it was surely barely justice that we should experience a reciprocity of civilities, and be permitted to range over the field of magnificent preparations, like tame animals, until we had collected sufficient intelligence to answer our purposes. But I seem to forget I am an historian, not a betrayer of the secrets of trade; I shall therefore check my zeal, and shrink back into my proper character.

“The world” (it must thus however be apparent) “is a stage, and all the men “and women merely players;” but that the children of six feet high should appear in much more childish parts than the pigmies of society, is somewhat astonishing, unless we settle it, that no one has it in

his power to do extravagant things, until he ought to know what to choose and what to reject; and that whilst the young and rising generation are learning how to conduct themselves when restraint shall be no more, the declining one are bidding their last adieu to the revellings, the vices, and the absurdities of life; and thus the same fantastic and the same idle ball is kept up from period to period without shame or compunction; so that we may with justice say, "It is a youth of *care*,
 "and an old age of *frolic*," instead of *vice versa*, as the poet represents it.

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CHAP.

C H A P. V.

A mirror for love-sick damsels. Much ado about nothing. Far fetcht delicacy, and an attempt at the sentimental.

NOT a day passed without my flattering myself that Camilla would have the courage, or, perhaps, more properly, the weakness to repeat her visit; but here my prescience failed me, and my mother remarked it to me as a very valuable feature, because, according to her system, there was a wide difference between falling into a casual error, and becoming insensible to the important distinctions of right and wrong. But however I might be delighted with my mistress's principles, I was distressed with the interruption of our acquaintance, and had a thousand chimæras suggesting themselves, as well for my re-introduction at Mr. Berkeley's, as for torturing myself from the great

great probability of losing her, unless our intercourse could be renewed,

My mother having been for a long time intreated to go with a very agreeable party to Marybone-Gardens, now for the first time consented. She well knew public amusements were not my father's taste, and she had no idea that a miracle would be wrought on his disposition merely for her punishment.

I was resolved to shake off my chagrin, and leaving my Camilla to her destiny, think no more of her, until encouraged by some favourable incident; but how I meant to keep my resolution will more fully appear, when I confess that I dressed myself in her favourite suit of clothes for my lively expedition, satisfied that I should enjoy more pleasure, however tinged by melancholy, in recollecting the days I had seen with her, than all that could be said or done for my entertainment.

We

We had passed about a couple of hours very comfortably, when we were somewhat alarmed by the company's crouding round one particular box from imagining there was a quarrel. At length, by standing on tip-toes, and watching my opportunity to peep over the people's shoulders, who should I perceive but my Camilla in a fainting fit, the cause of which I instantly impured to my sudden appearance in the habit she had seen in the glass.

I made my way through the crowd, cursing the stars, my profession and myself, for my folly and my want of consideration; and placing myself between her and the spectators, besought her, as she was now reviving, to compose herself and quit the gardens.

Mr. Frank, said she, I am glad, yet—
 Yet what, my dear madam? what are you glad of, and what distresses you? Can I be any way assisting or serviceable to you?
 You

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You must know how happy you would make me by your commands.

The starers began to disperse; and indeed it is strange that in a land of politeness one misfortune can never happen alone; for where the feelings are delicate, it must be a sufficient misfortune to be ill in a public place, without being constituted a common spectacle for the multitude. Let humanity itself make a pause on this spot, and remember that to do acceptable things is much better than to do busy ones; and that there is more real good-nature in sparing than oppressing a stranger.

I said whatever tenderness and civility could dictate to reconcile Camilla to my attentions; but though I could perceive she looked at me with approbation, I could also perceive that she looked at me with terror, and I overheard her whisper Cordelia, that she had indeed been very wicked, and could never forgive herself.

Cordelia.

Cordelia treated me with all the sweet complaisance imaginable, asked if my mother was with me, expressed the most friendly earnestness to see her, and intreated that we would join company. An old friend of their father's, a cheartful woman about fifty, had indulged them in this little excursion, and we spent a most pleasing evening. But such was the obstinacy of Camilla, that though I could not but flatter myself she would have been glad of my conversation, she would not consent to my taking a place in their coach, but insisted that if it was an accommodation for them to bring home one of my friends, my mother herself should oblige Cordelia and her by accompanying them.

Cordelia found an opportunity of informing my mother that Camilla's country relation was dead, and, as she left no will, the heirs at law had seized on their property to the total exclusion of her cousin: that this incident was considered by Mr.
and

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and Mrs. Berkley as a decline of fortune, which authorised them to treat her with less ceremony than ever; in consequence of which opinion she was made absolute house-keeper in town. That as to her part, her father and mother thought it too great a happiness to permit her to spend much time with her cousin; but notwithstanding all impediments, she would find an opportunity of making her an early visit, and establish an intimacy between her and Camilla.

This was a blessed point gained. As I had always the reputation of being an industrious and a successful young fellow, there was nothing to create one inconvenient suspicion in the face of our affairs. Our little habitation was rather neat than elegant; and the entertainment we gave all our visitants such as indicated easy not affluent circumstances.

Cordelia was beyond expectation kind, for the very next afternoon appearing
favour-

favourable, she, with Camilla in her hand, repaired to the spot of our residence, and I had the felicity of spending many hours with these ladies, after having repeatedly despaired of ever seeing them more; for I, who could foretell fortunate or unfortunate events to all the world besides, was in the most total ignorance respecting the changes and chances in which I myself was concerned.

Cordelia wept for joy on being restored, as she called it, to my mother's acquaintance, and Camilla, I could perceive, was highly pleased with the commencement of an acquaintance between her and so valuable a woman as she had always understood my mother to be; but as she was unable to subdue the idea of having offended the Deity by her enquiries into the future, and had in no degree got the better of her idea of consequent punishment, she conversed with me with an equal portion of pain and pleasure. My mother still continued happy
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in her pious sensibility, as she called it, and insisted upon it, that as the impression could do her no harm, I ought not too soon to undeceive her. Premature steps, she said, were always productive of severe repentance; and that, in her opinion, it would be safest as well as wisest to form my whole train of proceedings with respect to Camilla, before I ventured to communicate the secrets of my conduct. I was obliged to acquiesce, because I was unable to confute her reasoning and enjoy the present good, without betraying (at least) too great anxiety for the hidden purposes of Providence.

A very few visits were sufficient to constitute my mother and Camilla the most affectionate friends; for, abstracted from my interest in either the one or the other, they were so perfectly amiable and so irresistibly engaging, that to know them was to be attached to them. My mother found, from some hints which Camilla dropped,

dropped, that Cordelia was going to be married. I rejoiced in the circumstance, and the more particularly from the consciousness of having been the principal instrument in that business; and my mother at length drew her into a confidential confession of many things in her own situation.

Happy, said she, one day, madam, as I am in my cousin's prospects, I will not deny to you that I am trembling at my own. Mrs. Berkley has, out of her abundant generosity, chose me a husband, almost old enough to be my grandfather, and in every respect, the most disagreeable man on earth. She presumes upon my uncomfortable and friendless situation, and, from allowing me no will on any other occasion, has not an idea of my claiming one on this the most important occasion of my life.

My mother had the good sense to spare my feelings, by concealing this piece of intel-

intelligence, at the same time that she endeavoured to support the spirits of her young friend. She observed to her, as I afterwards learnt, that a breach of duty was dreadful in points where the tie actually subsisted; but that we ought to distinguish shadows from realities, and more especially in an instance where our happiness or misery was the question; or otherwise we should be liable to commit a sacrifice when we imagined we were only making a concession. That no aunt or uncle in the universe had a right to step beyond the bounds of persuasion; nor ought a husband to be accepted by us, unless much more the result of our own inclinations than their authority, or our desire of delivering ourselves from an uneasy situation; for that the greatest evils of a single state had hope for their alleviation, but when once disposed of at the altar, if united to wretchedness, nothing but despair or patient endurance remained for us to the end of our existence.

CHAP.

C H A P. VI.

Human inconstancies. Some reflections, entirely new, on dependance. A chimerical tale in the guise of wisdom and probability.

I HAD conceived that if once I was so happy as to renew my intimacy with the Miss Berkleys, the way would be smooth before me; instead of which my hours of attendance at the office became painful to me, from the idea that they were the impediments to our meeting, and my hours of recess were rendered irksome by waiting for them in vain; thus it is plain that we are very unfit judges of what is necessary to our happiness, and, there is no doubt, frequently obtain our wish, our idle wishes, at once to punish and convince us of our folly. I confessed my feelings, as usual, to my mother; and if her wise reflections and admonitions

were insufficient to compose, they confirmed my mind as to the unremitting application to business.

A lady was now introduced to me, young and beautiful as an angel: I had the good fortune to recollect I had seen her at Lord Millbank's, and picked up her history in the course of my nobility connexions.

You are, said I, madam, after giving her due impressions of my wisdom, most undeservedly, a very unhappy woman; but it is in your own power to bring good out of evil; your husband is of a dissipated turn, and perhaps has too little attention to your accommodation. You must not however justify his conduct; at present your fame is unspotted, but take care, for it cannot long remain so, unless you have the prudence, the resolution to forego the acquaintance of the gentleman who calls himself your husband's friend. Your heart is uncorrupted, your sensibility
strong

strong, and the voice of friendship soothing; yet believe me, he is neither the harmless or the sincere man you take him for: his vanity and his licentiousness equally prompt him to form designs upon you; and his first step towards breaking you into his schemes, will be to give the world an idea that things are in the desired train, at once to shew you, that as you have no reputation to lose, you can have no disgrace to fear. Shun him therefore as you would your evil genius. A happy change of life is in store for you; and the consciousness of having not only well intended but well executed, will prove a satisfaction to you beyond what I am able to describe.

I am shocked, said she, even at the bare mention of danger. My own integrity and the good opinion I entertained of my husband's friend, made it impossible for me to see the hazardous predicament I had attained. I will follow the

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advice you give me, whether from the stars or some fortunate inspiration, for I begin to discover that from the malice or the depravity of mankind, a woman can be alone safe in the friendship of her husband. And yet, continued she, who would have imagined that benevolence and compassion were mere professional virtues; and that where purity of intention was apparent, an observance of forms must be kept up, in order to secure a female from the suspicion of impropriety, to preserve her from unworthy attempts? Thus in exchange for safety we must give up sociability. I thank you, sir, for the hints you have favoured me with, and will henceforth regulate my steps by a new standard; and, in conformity to the maxims of a bad world, treat every person I am acquainted with, as if we must one day become enemies, when neither the infirmities nor the virtues of my composition will be brought to operate against me.

On

On this lady's retiring (who from reaping the benefit of my admonitions is now superior to all her difficulties) a young woman was shewn in whose appearance was that of a gentlewoman; but there was a something of distress that ran through it. I beg, sir, said she, since you profess the power, you will tell me what fate is in store for me; Madam, replied I, having consulted my learned oracles, you will be very happy if once your good sense can get the better of your prejudices— You live at present rather to the world's opinion than your own, and conceive that there is more felicity in starving genteely than in submitting to situations that your education has given you a very false idea of; but believe me you are deceived— Good-breeding will dignify the humblest condition, and we are with very few exceptions considered by the world, as we ourselves choose to direct; if we can despise its contempt, we shall enjoy its favour; but if we shrink at the former,

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the latter flies us for ever: your father, madam, was one of those professions, that, though they do not afford a subsistence, make it impossible for any addition to be obtained by the help of industry—To the army, and the church, it is that our streets are peculiarly indebted for the chief part of their miserable wanderers—I sincerely pity the children of such parents who neglect to inculcate those only great lessons; that nothing is praise-worthy but what is honest; nothing contemptible that is compatible with the laws of God and the laws of society; for by these lessons the false notions engendered by pride and nurtured by vanity are happily guarded against, and no less happily eradicated, and good sense is established the rule of conduct.

I own indeed that formerly elegant young women were most mortifyingly situated—no employments were open to them but such as are repugnant to fine feelings;

feelings; but now that the arts are encouraged; now that the works of ingenuity have their regular sales appointed, which equally produce the necessary stipend, and bring fame, that best consolation of fallen greatness, along with them, their distresses are at an end. The societies for the encouragement of genius are so far from excluding, that they invite the ladies to share the profits, to participate the reputation of their exhibitions, and a genteel independence; nor are the walks of literature by any means denied to them; one thing is however to be lamented, women of talents frequently make themselves disapproved where they would otherwise be venerated, by affecting a superiority over their own sex, and mixing in the giddy scenes of life. All the art therefore, madam, is to discover wherein your particular turn consists, to bear your faculties and your honours meekly, and prosecute your undertakings with firmness and resolution. Could young women

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of education be spirited up to feel their own consequence, we should not want for public institutions for cultivating their abilities, or directing them to be useful. You have done me the favour to listen attentively; may I then hope that you perceive the reason and the necessity of what I have said? But to return more immediately to business, I can assure you that within little more than a week, a lady, remarkable for her benevolence and her understanding, will make overtures towards an acquaintance with you, and from one of your own sex, whose character is unimpeachable, you can have nothing to fear; she will point out to you the proper track you ought to pursue, and I am confident you will have reason to bless the hour you visited the fortune-teller. I gave the necessary signal for having my fair visitant followed home, and discovered that she was the daughter of a clergyman, who had died about a twelvemonth before; that her condition was both unhappy and de-

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pendent, and that melancholy and despondence had induced her to seek comfort from a source that healthful minds can despise.

My mother was delighted when she had the power of doing good, and therefore most cheerfully entered on her task; but as Miss Sedgmore's education had been liberal, and there was nothing to operate in the cause of superstitious credulity but her dejection of spirits, much address was required in the performance of it.

On the frequent returns of my trusty spy, who was repeatedly dispatched for intelligence, the church was the place fixed upon for the commencement of our schemes: grief and piety are common concomitants; but it is really strange that the soul that can subscribe to the power of its Creator, and derives a knowledge of his wonderful attributes from the church responses, can now prostrate itself at the foot of the Divinity for protection,

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and then visit the idle wretches of my profession for information respecting future events.

My mother has that something about her, which, to borrow the language of Mr. Stern, was ever beckoning to the unhappy to rest upon her. Miss Sedgmore was consequently struck by her manner, and from the intercourse of eyes, and the little exchange of civilities their interviews was capable of, was infinitely prepossessed in her favour. My mother was however fearful of being too quick in her advances: the young lady had her delicacies; it was not till after a tedious period that a communication of friendly offices was opened between them—an invitation was at length given by my mother, and accepted on the part of Miss Sedgmore, of taking a dish of tea with us.

The distant relation in whose house she happened to be situated, was a linen-draper, at whose shop my mother had
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accidentally dealt; and as we always paid ready money for our purchases: we were with all trades people rather valuable customers; a circumstance that not a little contributed to facilitate her designs, by giving her importance with the family as well as with Miss Sedgmore. I have dwelt with particular pleasure on this little article, because I must think that the well educated and unfortunate young women in every country deserve the most generous attentions; for as their accomplishments are so many baits for the cruel and unprincipled, they ought to be so many incitements to protection with the humane and benevolent part of the community.

Miss Sedgmore was soon convinced by my mother's eloquence, that a state of dependence was the most servile state on earth; and that she who possessed talents of whatsoever kind that could enable her to obtain a genteel provision for herself, and failed to exert them, was so far from a gentlewoman, that she was only an

indolent lump of meanness and absurdity. A taste for drawing was found to be her particular genius; a master's assistance was called in, and by very uncommon application on her part, and very judicious instructions on his, she soon became a tolerable proficient; and many pieces have actually been exhibited of her own designing and execution in several of our societies.

But though in the general our office was rendered a blessing to the community, yet it cannot be denied that no people whatever promote the purposes of vice like fortune-tellers: my master was naturally a benevolent minded man, yet, as I in due time discovered, he could not avoid sometimes playing the pandar, and assisting the business of destruction; for very many of our profession, as he himself told me, and more particularly his predecessor, were in actual pay with libertines and brothel keepers; because they well know that when the imagination has received
its

its infection, every incident is considered as corroborations; and that the poor unsuspecting wretch, from believing it her destiny, falls into the snare of the spoiler, though she would otherwise have been most vigilantly upon her guard. Gentlemen, as well married as single, have also their fiends of prey in different parts of the town; but my master would observe that so long as the folly prevailed of considering the voice of an individual as the voice of fate, so long would the multitude continue to be duped in their property, by the artful, the unprincipled, and the mercenary; yet for a moment, he would cry, let us examine into this strange propensity. On most occasions in life we are much more inclined to claim than confess superiority: in this instance however our pride and our vanity sleep—we not only meet on equality with the very refuse of the community, but rest on them as on the bosom of Providence; and whilst we behold the wonders of creation, and feel

all the dangers to which we are exposed, instead of looking up to the great Author of the one, and Guardian of the other, we solicit an old miserable man or woman to read us the dread page of futurity, and trust to our own good management for escaping the evils of our destiny. The more I entered into the nature and became acquainted with the merits of my profession, the more I was dissatisfied with it; my master would give me many sensible lectures on the scruples and antipathies I entertained, and tell me that however fit I might be for the next world I made a very bad figure in this, where every engagement, and every situation had its certain portion of chicanery: Was not the soldier, he would ask me, allured by the fife and drum, and an affectation of sociality on the part of the commander, to chuse the trade of blood and slaughter, when the wages were scanty and the dangers abundant? Did not the sons of the law evidently exert their abilities in saving the
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property of their clients, merely for the purpose of grasping it themselves? The physician and the apothecary, however they might possess the confidence or good opinion of their patient, did they not contrive to promote each others interests, and though a life was at stake, oblige a sick wretch to swallow potions, in order to intitle themselves to their several emoluments, which they were sensible must distress but could not benefit him? In a word, he would labour to convince me that as no man could live by honesty, and it was absolutely necessary all men should obtain a livelihood, it could never be culpable to be dishonest under certain restrictions—more especially in our profession, for that if the heart was weak and presumptuous enough to fall from its divine dependencies, it could not be unlawful to feed a distemper, that sooner or later must terminate in vice and infamy.

I was nevertheless too far gone in my prejudices to be reclaimable, which obliged my master on many occasions to attend, for fear my conscientious qualms should undo us. My mother too lamented the impossibility of separating the follies from the safety of the individual; for however fair she persuaded herself it was to profit by the one, she could never be reconciled to the remotest idea of endangering the other.

CHAP.

C H A P. VII.

A dash of politics, a very short Chapter.

AS all professions have their harvest, so government took care ours should not want its fruitful crop; whenever a lottery was therefore advertised we did not fail to prepare ourselves for business, a face of expectation was presented to us by all orders of our customers, and though they found those expectations cheated over and over, they had nevertheless the folly to confide; and, in despite of all our fallible predictions, for this was our most uncertain ground, the infatuation was too powerful to be resisted; and we were undeprived of our opportunities of fleecing them of their remaining little property.

The

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The decline of trade is variously accounted for by our news-paper politicians ; but there is no cause that operates more banefully than this authorized gambling ; for while the mind is under the idle illusion, no purchases are to be made untill the ticket comes up, and we feel our wants surprisngly suspended by the idea of approaching plenitude ; and when, instead of a prize, a blank falls to our lot, disappointment, and future schemes of reparation deprive the shopkeeper and the handicraft of their emoluments, and those that bind themselves to be our preservers are our destroyers, and though we should loudly exclaim against any new species of taxation, we tamely submit to this, and are the equal dupe and ridicule of the higher powers. To the everlasting honour of the stars, though frequent mistakes were committed, many successful chances were foretold at our office ; such as that the high prizes would come up in shares ; and it must also be confessed as
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an eternal stigma, that notwithstanding my mother and I were dabblers in the small way, we never could hit on the lucky numbers or secure ourselves from losses and mortifications.

Would it not then be highly salutary to community in general if government would generously save us from temptation? A bird in hand is truly worth two in the bush, for in the course of my profession I discovered, that many worthy people, in order to throw themselves in fortune's way, parted with the happy certainty they possessed, and by their previous self-denials, unspeakably aggravated the stroke of disappointment.

The theatres were also great friends to us the delegates of the stars; for whenever a little interesting rencounter happened, we were instantly consulted by both parties after the event; not a spouting club in town but sooner or later sent to Delphos to enquire the fate of their he-

roes

roes from the sacred oracles; but as it was no difficult matter to foresee that the raw unbred 'prentice, who could not speak a single speech with propriety, or ambitious stripling, who retained the broad twang of the foreigner, were little calculated to find favour with a polite audience, we often sent them away wonderfully dissatisfied with our predictions; but when their ill success convinced them of the truth of our art, they constantly formed a happy resource for their pride in believing that what was the mere consequence of their want of qualifications, was the perverseness and cruelty of their stars, and that it was in vain to attempt to counteract their destiny.

○ Servants, apprentices, attornies, clerks, and half-pay officers were our constant customers; not that I would insinuate the slightest disrespect to this large part of society; for men of the best families, philosophers, and men of literature neither

disdained

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disdained to visit us, nor had by any means a poor opinion of the science of astrology, as we contrived it: and if the reader will only take the trouble to look back to the description Camilla as a first rate visitant received of it, he will not, perhaps, wonder, that however they might affect to despise our report, when it happened to correspond with their wishes, that they should hug the dear deceit, and congratulate themselves on their wisdom in preserving appearances.

It cannot be concealed, and yet the acknowledgment is painful to me, that the success of any particular person in the several neighbourhoods of this metropolis, though the result of merit and industry, was sure to procure us many customers; and such is the horrid nature of envy, that we never gave greater satisfaction than when we foretold calamities to those objects of competition, of spleen, and illiberal wrath. But where the mind is right
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the conduct cannot be wrong.—Convinced of the wisdom of Providence, we patiently abide the present, and with resignation await the future.—Convinced of the wonderful order of the universe both as to natural and moral operations, we look up to heaven alone for instruction, or rest on the great teacher Death, and God adore.—Where the mind is right we can generously rejoice in the prosperity of others, and conscious of our own unworthiness, instead of murmuring at obtaining so little, praise and bless the divine bounty for what has been bestowed; in fine, it is to our education, our connexion, and our vanity, that we are indebted for our illiberality, our absurdities, our superstitions, and our presumptions, and if they were once duly corrected and duly attended to, our propensities to wrong would be so far subdued that fortune-tellers must either starve or seek some other profession. I may perhaps be charged with a strange departure from character on this occasion,

but

but as my deceptions were so many violences on, rather than violations of my veracity, I think I may be allowed to speak occasional truths, and it is in proportion as I recollect instances of my own finesse I recollect the cruel artifices of men less nice than myself, and I am incited to labour the point in order to make some small atonement. To return, however, to business: I was one afternoon paring my nails with all the nonchalance of other great men, when who should be shewn into my closet but Mrs. Bridget, my father's chambermaid!

I am come, Sir, said she, to tell you, that the greater part of what you told me is already fulfilled. My master has promised me marriage, and my mistress is ordered to Bath by the doctors, who say she cannot hold it long, and I verily believe if he had not gone down with her, that I should have been able to bring him here, though indeed to tell you the truth, he

has so great a dislike to you gentlemen, that he says you ought to be made an example of; but pray, tell me again and again, will he really and truly make me his wife? After many hums and haws, for the question was very closely put, and I was rather unhinged by the previous part of her harangue, I replied, why you must remember whose face you saw in the glass, and that glass never yet told a falsehood; that's clever, that's as I said it was, cry'd she, in a kind of extasy; but my master says that you are all cheats, and that when there is any meaning in what you say, you pick out of people's families, which is a worse theft than picking pockets, and that had you said a little about him besides the foolish nonsense you did, he would have had you before a magistrate, and sent you to Bridewell.

I shuddered at my own and my mother's escape, for I knew my father's disposition to be too daring and too unrelenting

ing not to be capable of any thing, and therefore resolved to keep clear of his history so long as I continued my character of conjurer. Whilst I was lost in the thought she ran on, I did ask him if you would let him come when it is dark, whether by way of frolic or fun, he would not wait upon you, and he did not say he would not, but laughed and smiled, and so I think he's half inclined to oblige me. My mother approved my resolution of guarding against my father's wiles, and observed to me that he was too hackneyed a villain, for even the actual voice of fate, much less of the thing he was sure was an imposture, to strike him with awe and bring him to penitence.

C H A P. VIII.

The Fortune-Teller in a no less whimsical than critical situation. An instance or two of antiquated friendship, with some far-fetched ideas of gratitude, constancy, &c. &c.

THUS narrowly escaped from the snare I had been preparing for myself, and having determined to trust my father's reformation as well as his chastisement wholly to Providence, I turned my mind to other matters: and I must beg leave to observe, that had not my affections been as fixed as fate, for in the lovely Camilla was centered all that is valuable or amiable in the sex, I should now have found myself in much danger from a fair visitant who came to consult the stars in an affair, the decision of which depended solely on her voice.

It

It was true indeed that an unreasonable father had appointed by his last will and testament, that unless she married with the consent of his trustees, she should forfeit five thousand pounds; but what soul could be so little as to bring that sum in competition with happiness? This young lady, however, had more of the prudential in her composition than is generally to be found with the lively part of the female world, and though she was resolved never to sacrifice her peace she wished much to preserve her fortune likewise.

To put her in a proper method was a puzzling point, and yet for a conjurer to confess himself posed was at once to confess himself both fool and knave: I therefore asked time to consider the case, and was to the full as far to seek on its expiration as at its commencement, and in short must have made not only a dishonourable but a very contemptible retreat, if my never-failing friend, my master, had not

helped me out at a dead lift. The number of guardians or trustees to this young lady's fortune were three, two of which my master conceived it possible to buy, the other, he said, must be bullied out of his consent, which, he added, would be no difficult matter if the lady had only a tender, and at the same time spirited lover to act in her behalf. I told him how much I was obliged to him for suggesting so plausible a scheme, when I myself was actually at a dead set, adding, that I did not doubt but my fair client would avail herself of this ingenuity. Frank, said my master, looking somewhat archly upon me, shall I advance a step or two farther in your service? I know you have merit, I believe you have principle; suppose therefore you are thrown by my dexterous management as a blessing from heaven in this distressed damsel's way, and pointed out to her as by her destiny the only champion that can effect her deliverance. Come, come, said he, mistaking my silence for diffidence

fidence and modesty, few fellows make a more prepossessing appearance when you choose to look the gentleman, and I think I advise you well when I advise you to pursue the track your good genius has marked out for you. I will not deny, Sir, that the lady has too many charms for me to have been proof against your flattering proposal if my heart was free, but you must not call me disingenuous if I even continue to conceal particulars from your knowledge, notwithstanding I have so much reason to rely upon you; the affair is a delicate one, the object of my approbation so situated as for it not to be in my power either to learn her sentiments of me, or communicate my wishes respecting her, and therefore—No apologies, said my master, I have acquired no right by the kindnesses I have shewn you to rob you of your secrets. May you be successful, but as I have not the honour to know your flame, and find from your best account of it that from the per-

verseness of circumstances your connexion
 is a kind of tender entanglement rather than
 a matrimonial prelude; I cannot but
 think it unlucky that it should stand be-
 tween you and so very inviting an oppor-
 tunity of self promotion. Though I can
 safely declare my heart never for a moment
 debated as to its election, yet on consi-
 dering the matter I could not wonder that
 my master's friendly zeal should excite
 him to inveigh against an impediment
 that promised merely to be an impediment
 to the improvement of my fortune, and
 the more especially when making my re-
 port to the lady, it was evident that she
 was so wholly disengaged as to leave me
 an equal chance with any other enterpris-
 ing young fellow for bearing the prize.
 She, however, after some little time re-
 collected a relation in the navy, who had
 once professed much kindness for her; to
 him she determined to communicate her
 necessities, and though no union might
 ever take place between him and her, get
 him

him to release her from the tyranny of three men, who were evermore tormenting her with matrimonial proposals in favour of one or other of their friends. This scheme she soon carried into execution, and handsomely rewarded all those who had persuaded her to the measure; but as for her relation, he had idly thrown away his heart before he had the remotest idea that his fair cousin was attainable, and was so *absurd* as to wave his interest to preserve his vows inviolate; the lady too, contrary to the custom of most fine ladies, honoured him not a little for his ingenuoufness and integrity, and made the *awkward* couple a present that contributed in a large degree towards their conjugal convenience and felicity.

That honesty was the best policy, was an adage hourly verified in our practice, for we never accomplished a generous or justifiable work, but our customers were sure to pour in thick and threefold upon

us, as if to encourage us to pursue the praise-worthy track. Two young gentlemen, belonging to this same family, employed us in their preservation, as they called it, because they were severally intended by their fathers for professions they detested. My master cast their nativity with all that affectation of meaning and piety which never failed to captivate the most enlarged understanding; and having by the assistance of his young customers pointed out some memorable circumstances, was implicitly credited when he affirmed that the one would fall before the enemy's bastion in his first campaign if made a foldier, and that the other would die an inferior clergyman if devoted to the church; consequently as the ambition of these arbitrary fires was to behold their hopeful heirs grasping a truncheon or dignified with lawn sleeves, on this *certainty* of disappointment they eagerly turned their thoughts to different walks of life, and thereby compleated the
double

double design of the Conjuror and his followers.

It is impossible to conceive the power of an industrious individual who thus obtains a master key to the secrets of every family he hears of, and has his mind continually bent upon the ways and means of deceiving. It is reported, but I do not say with what foundation, that even the ear of royalty itself has been tickled or wounded as the Conjuror was gracious or morose; but be that as it may, if I was disposed to divulge a variety of tales that have reached my knowledge, or facts that I have been an eye witness to, I am satisfied I should throw one half of the nation into convulsions of laughter, and plunge the other half in sorrow and tears. I, however am, equally disinclined to such ungenerous conduct; the weakness and the absurdity of my cotemporaries were confidentially exhibited, and I shall not prove myself a villain of the deepest dye

to gratify the curiosity, or the malevolence of any set of people whatsoever. My whole motive indeed for mentioning what I have done is to exculpate the ignorant, and level the proud; for abject as the first may be deemed, or presuming as we may find the last, there is in reality no kind of difference between man and man but what education which teaches us to conceal our foibles and imperfections, and riches that place us in a more favourable point of view, constitute. But to return to my study.

My master, who hourly professes himself under infinite obligations to me and my mother for our unremitting services, had the goodness to profess himself anxious to reward us by making my circumstances easy. Be assured Frank, said he to me one morning, what I am now going to say to you results from the affection of friendship, not an inquisitiveness of disposition. You have gone so far as to
own

own that you love, and I have reason to hope you are beloved by an amiable young woman, and yet that there are insurmountable bars to your union; if any thing within my power can advance your reputation or promote your happiness, believe me you cannot more essentially please me than by giving me the clue; I have no family claims upon me, and it is very probable that if you survive me you will find I did not esteem you a little, but I have no idea of your waiting for an event that must exclude me from the possibility of either beholding or participating your felicity, if I can be in any degree instrumental to what I so ardently wish as your establishment.

There was something so unlike a conjuror, and so like a warm and disinterested friend in this overture, that it affected me unspeakably. I had never experienced paternal kindness, but by the deficiency had accustomed myself to estimate it at the

highest price ; it was therefore only natural for me to feel almost filial gratitude for what equalled the most tender parental consideration ; my mother's eyes too bore faithful testimony to her heart, and the scene for a few moments was indescribably pathetic. I then assured this indulgent, this noble-minded master, I would take an opportunity of convincing him that I could not avail myself of his friendship in the manner he proposed ; and, as a proof, nothing but the critical concatenation of circumstances could induce me to practice the double self-denial, accepting his kind offers, and endeavouring to recommend myself to my beloved girl, so nothing should prompt me during the course of my future existence to take a single measure but with his knowledge and sanction, for that since he had shewn himself desirous of going such very uncommon lengths in my favour, he should find me keep pace with him at least in gratitude. As my mother never let a good moral

moral pass unenforced on my sensibility; she now dwelt largely upon the singular blessings I had received; you see, my child, said she, mine was not the voice of dotage or of superstition; I ever told you, that though we were unable to command success, it was our duty to deserve it, and that to merit the care and the bounty of Providence was one of the first and surest steps towards enjoying both the one and the other. I from my own experience cannot wonder, continued she, that weak minds should be subject to enthusiasm; all events are hidden from our sight, and yet that you will in the end rise superior to your mortifications, be united to your Camilla, and become an honour to your mother, are particulars that I feel myself so firmly persuaded of, as almost to amount to the presumption of a prophecy; but when the characters of mercy are so legible, can it offend a beneficent Deity, that the humblest optics should

dare to read them, or mention them with pious exultation ?

C H A P. IX.

Some daubings in the domestic way. A fire side scene. A proof of female penetration, together with other feminine matters.

CAMILLA now called upon my mother and informed her that Cordelia was married, and was afraid it would not be in her power to see her for some time without her father and mother's discovering her connexion with my family, a circumstance which of all others she knew would be displeasing to them.

Mr. Moleworth, Camilla said, feeling himself on his wedding-day particularly happy, and particularly independent, talked more than was his usual custom, and amongst other subjects by way of entertaining the company, told them the story
of

of his visiting a certain Fortune-teller, of his seeing Cordelia's face in a glass, as his future wife, and she did suppose had not a little enhanced the Fortune-teller's reputation; nay added she, with a somewhat of peculiar consciousness in her countenance, I fear even my aunt was too much struck by the report not to make him an early visit, concluding with asking my mother's opinion of such people and their predictions.

My mother smiled, and told her that she had her private sentiments on the subject, and would communicate them at some convenient period, and make a few discoveries respecting their proceedings that would astonish her. Camilla affected to be much better satisfied with this delay than was in reality the case, but apprehensive of forfeiting my mother's good opinion, though she secretly determined never to become her daughter-in-law without a previous confession of all her faults,
she

she did not choose to press her on the occasion.

My mother conceived, since it was likely my mistress would attend me, that it might be useful to give me an intimation of my Camilla's danger. These wise and good-natured relations, said she, when we were alone, not content with making Camilla miserable in her present condition, have provided a husband for her, that would make her miserable to the end of her existence; but you, Frank, ought rather to be pleased than offended with the circumstances. Camilla's heart is free, and it will be very extraordinary if you a Conjuror, and I not above two removes from a witch, cannot defeat the designs of an ignorant and a malicious woman.

Day after day was passed over by me in unusual perturbations; every time my door opened, I hoped, yet dreaded to behold Mrs. Berkley. The moment at length arrived,

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arrived, and was big with interesting events.

Having cast her nativity, and examined into the bosom of futurity, I told her that she had had a wedding lately in her family, and there was another at that instant in contemplation. But, continued I, though the first promises all the felicity you can wish, the second teems with misery.

She smiled; you do not credit my report, said I; indeed your art, Sir, for once, has failed you; I was never better satisfied, or was inclined to have more faith on any occasion; the misery you talk of can affect only one individual who deserves to be miserable, and it is therefore that I shall have pleasure in beholding it. But madam, cried I, you don't seem to be aware, that the person alluded to is your relation, consequently that her unhappiness and disgrace—O
will

will she then, said the malevolent wretch, at last descend from her high flights, and, instead of the romantic advocate of virtue, prove herself a daughter of frailty?—Better and better—she shall indeed have set herself up for an example, and endeavoured to sink my children in the opinion of the world! but she shall be married and punished, that's my comfort and final determination.

Mercy and pity, madam, are lady-like virtues. A fig for your virtues, said she, give me a little plain sense and a spirit of revenge; so saying, she rose up and quitted my closet abruptly. I was almost frantic, and if my customers had been worthy to have seen the anguish I endured, they would have entertained a wonderful high opinion of my prescience who could not foresee the effect what I absurdly offered would produce on the mind of a haughty and unfeeling woman. Mrs. Berkley it seems had a person with her, but as

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they

they were limited in point of time, they hurried away and left me in a state of mortification, much easier to be conceived than described.

It was, however, the felicity of my profession to allow few moments for reflection or self-accusation; an old fellow born down by age and infirmities was brought in to me, and, telling me he was going to be married, begged to know whether he might hope for an heir to his estate.

I was in no humour for encouraging matrimonial connexions, and as I could form no very extraordinary opinion of the lady's principles or understanding that could consent to unite herself to such a walking hospital, I did not hesitate to reply yes—but a spurious one.—The young damsel of your affections, believe me, is no Diana, and should you once put yourself and fortune in her power will make you severely smart for your egregious folly.

Why

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Why heyday, said he, how dare you speak ill of the innocent? The lady I mean has seen little of the world, has never heard of its vices, and has the best disposition, and the best character of any one I ever met with; you must therefore, old gentleman, be sadly out in your calculation.

Admitting what you say to be true, replied I, and that the stars might be at present put to absolute defiance with respect to your spotless favourite, yet let us try the merits of the cause for one poor instant at the bar of common sense: Advanced as you are in years, and infirm as it is apparent you are in constitution, can you conceive it either probable or natural that youth and beauty can love you? If then love has nothing to do with your union, and your wife has experienced how insufficient riches are in making us happy, would it be strange if she was to sigh for liberty, or could we think it wonderful,

derful, if agreeable things from an agreeable young fellow should have charms for her? We will still go further, and suppose her heart upright, and her vanity beyond the reach of flattery; yet can you be sure that your own faith would remain unshaken, that you could be happy in her absence, or permit her to enjoy a thousand amusements suitable to her time of life, without trembling? Or, could you approve her former friendships with even her own sex, lest she should be taught to despise the miserable hunks who was an eternal spy and restraint on her actions? If you could, you must be more than human; and if you could not (for I had insensibly warmed with the subject) can you resolve for your own gratification to make an amiable creature wretched; and, in proportion as she deserves best at your hands, leave her a prey to tears and unremitting lamentations? for unjust suspicions are cruel things, and hard

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to be brooked by gentleness and innocence.

The old man was disturbed—he paused—he looked wild—he appeared irresolute—I came here, said he, with confident expectation of being told I was in the actual road to happiness, but if she should not love me, or if I should feel the horrors you describe, from suspecting that to be the case, it would destroy us both. I think—I think—I will not have her.

I applauded his resolution, endeavoured to confirm his doubts, and he went away in the very disposition benevolence itself could have wished, when seeking to avert some barbarous sacrifice. The remaining hours of my confinement passed as usual; numberless persons received what they conceived their doom from my lips, and I ardently longed for my release.

My beloved mother, said I, throwing myself into a chair, this trade of mine, however I would persuade myself to the con-

contrary, is a diabolical one ; and you see the wisdom and the justice of heaven in making it the instrument of punishment.

You owe your present mortification, replied she, alone to your own folly ; you, who are in general for suspecting human nature without a cause, have now been complimenting it with a reason, by supposing that a woman of Mrs. Berkley's turn of mind could be incited to save Camilla from suffering ; you have yourself told me she was always her enemy, that she beheld her growing excellencies with spleen and dissatisfaction, from fancying she eclipsed the excellencies of her children ; and yet, instead of telling her Camilla would be one of the happiest of wives, if she married the man she designed for her, you make her exactly the desired report, and are then in agonies at your ill success ; Camilla will, however, be here this afternoon, and if you will compose your mind, and clear up your features, I will endeavour not only to retrieve

trieve this faux-pas, but make advantage of it, by founding whether she can be prevailed upon to accept you for her deliverer.

My dear, my generous mother ! cried I, quite transported ; that would be, indeed, to bring good out of evil. Do you but undertake, and I shall not doubt of your accomplishing ; she assured me nothing should be wanting on her part, and as quick transactions were frequent things with my imagination, I seemed instantly to tread in air, and look from an eminence on all my fellow creatures.

Camilla came at the expected time, and having prevailed on my master to officiate for me, I sat in an adjacent apartment in breathless expectation of my approaching felicity.

My mother began with telling her of a young couple who had that morning taken a French leave of their friends, and were gone to Scotland to be married ; but said
 I she,

she, though I shudder at the bare idea of this masculine courage in your eloping damsels, yet there are situations which even, I think, justify a young woman's acceptance of a legal protector, in a man of honour, of principle, and of generosity. Camilla sighed. My dear madam, said my mother, you are melancholy, but if there is any similitude between your situation, and what I have mentioned, I should be happy to make you a proposal. Your relations, you have candidly told me, are very unreasonable, and because fortune has rendered you dependent on them for a provision, imagine they have a right to enslave your mind. You cannot, you will not, I trust however, let them have such a triumph over you.

Not in the married state, replied she, though I confess their power at this juncture : but, my dear madam, what can a girl, situated as I am, do with herself? Three hundred pounds, my whole pittance, is lodged in my uncle's hands, and so unhappily lodged,

lodged, that I am really at a loss how to prove my claim to it. I am unfit for servile employments, perhaps from inclination, but I can never bring it to the test, as I have had it roughly hinted to me, that if I was capable of withdrawing from my uncle's protection, that however irreproachably or advantageously situated, reports should be circulated—that I blush but to think of—Of two evils, I am certain therefore you would advise me to chuse the least, and rather suffer my peace than my character to be wounded. Pardon me my sweet friend, said my mother, if I enter a little more particularly into the merits of the cause. I honour your resolution, and applaud your election ; but, as I am convinced you do not possess an aspiring mind, but could be satisfied with a competency and happiness, I am half tempted to intimate the wishes I have long entertained, that my son——She was inconceivably distressed—You are, my good madam, said she, touching a tender string ; perhaps I
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am in no degree insensible to Mr. Franks's good qualities, but there are insuperable objections.

Will you, as a proof, cried my mother eagerly, that I have not offended you, favour me with one or two of them?

In the first place then, said she, I know your son loves to live genteelly; if I marry without my uncle's consent, I shall not bring any man a single shilling. You have been so ingenuous to tell me you owe your whole subsistence to his industry, and such a mind ought not to be too heavily taxed.

And will you, in return for all his tenderness to me, make me the impediment? No madam, surely no! I have besides— Besides! what madam have you besides to offer against him? If you will enquire, I could not be reconciled to myself if I was capable of marrying a man that the world would say I courted; not a visit I have made you, but would be placed to his

account, and the finger of ridicule and scorn would be pointed at me, however innocent: excuse me, I can hear no more on the subject; the man I can consent to pass my life with, must not only love and pity me, he must approve and honour me; for as his good opinion of me would be the grand essential in my happiness, I must not have a shade on my delicacy, or leave my propriety open to the remotest impeachment; this is my fixed determination, and I will even go so far as to declare that I would prefer ill treatment and contempt from the man I disliked, to the doubtful approbation of the man of my affections.

My mother finding her so firm, could not attempt to push the matter farther, but told me that I ought to think myself uncommonly fortunate, that a girl of such proper, such exalted sentiments, entertained a secret partiality for me; and that she had a partiality for me, she was too honest to deny.

My

My reason was indeed well satisfied, but my love complained loudly of the rigid tenets by which she governed herself; I, however, too well knew the unconquerable romance of her composition to flatter myself that it was to be subdued by arguments: I was therefore advised by that cool headed philosopher, my mother, to rest my dependance once more on time, that slow, but sure mitigator of every human grievance.

But as tempests and calms are the alternate fate of mankind, so this violent agitation was succeeded by the most heart-felt tranquillity; for beyond my utmost penetration, my most sanguine hopes, I myself proved the saviour of my Camilla. The old fellow who had paid me a visit was her lover, though the fortune-teller was wholly ignorant of the circumstance, and as in a solicited interview, the next week, Camilla told him how impossible it was for her to be well affected towards their

union, he abruptly broke off the match, and his acquaintance with the Berkleys, nor would condescend to assign any reason for his conduct. Camilla flew with the glad tidings to my mother, nor was I long a stranger to her happy release.

The old gentleman on reflection, however, persuaded himself he had used his friends very ill, and that they were intitled to a compensation; he accordingly made his will solely in their favour, but his pride was too much piqued by their niece's refusal of him, to admit her amongst the number of the legatees, and he died in a short time afterwards.

This circumstance produced an unexpected effect on Mrs. Berkley's heart, viz. reconciling her to the conjurer, for thus she interpreted his oracles; that had Camilla married, all the fortune, now thrown into the Berkley family, would have been hers, and as the old gentleman lived so little a while, that she should have had the keen
mor-

mortification of beholding her a young, rich, and handsome widow, well then might I tell her of a miserable union.

C H A P. X.

*Prudery reversed. No fool like an old fool.
A touch on fairy ground, from whence
the reader, if he is wise, will soon effect
his escape.*

TH E S E events turning out so favourably, and my master's declaring an aversion for business ; on a review of my finances, for I was now worth near a thousand pounds, I resolved, with his good leave, to take in a labouring oar, and become myself, occasionally, the fine gentleman.

A man of middle age, and tolerable talents, we found, on enquiry, occupied a garret not many lanes distant from our office ; him I applied to, but after the articles were signed, I shuddered for the

consequence of what I had done. On conversing with him I discovered that the little reputation he possessed, was derived from an unjustifiable source, such for example, as speaking shocking things, foretelling deaths at stated periods, and terrifying his customers out of their lives. One woman in particular, who had the misfortune, as well as the weakness to consult him, was told she should die of the small-pox; his prophecy was fulfilled, for such was her dejection of spirits, that though she had a very favourable sort, she could neither eat nor sleep, and died a miserable spectacle, which the physical people, from not knowing the cause, called a galloping consumption. A second had a fever bestowed upon her at a particular period, a slight cold was therefore converted, by her tainted imagination, into the predicted disease, and she expired at the end of three weeks, a martyr to her own fears and superstition. A third, who, on the presumption of a melancholy aspect,

pect, was told she laboured under insurmountable difficulties, went home and hanged herself. A fourth, who was over head and ears in love, on being assured she should never marry the object, threw herself into Rosamond's pond, in St. James's park, in order to drown herself, but though taken out alive, lost her reason, and died in Bedlam. A young fellow, who had disobliged his father, was driven by his predictions to shoot himself. But not to dwell on so dismal a subject, such was the abhorrence I conceived for this murderer of his species, that nothing but the predicament I was under of practising on the public, could have prevented my giving him up to public justice; on recollection, however, I thought it my duty to retain him, to prevent further perpetration of guilt, and, if possible, bring him to repentance for the past.

Need I, after mentioning these particulars, observe, that instead of being relieved

by my partnership, I became an absolute prisoner ; for if I ventured to let him receive customers, for fear of bad consequences I durst never stir from behind the wainscot, and I learnt such things from him, as, if they could be safely told, would be more than sufficient to bring every impious pretender into disreputation with the whole community.

Had we, nevertheless, either the patience or the wisdom to stop and examine events, we should find that every thing worked together for good ; that every disappointment led the way to its attendant blessing, and every blessing in mercy was succeeded by disappointment, and the reason is obvious : is prosperity, for instance, our wish ? we no sooner make an advance, however un hoped for, than we look forward to something still more flattering, nor gain a point, but proves an incentive to larger views, and higher undertakings.

Happi-

Happiness is the game we fancy we are pursuing, but, by our mode of pursuit, we defeat our purposes. Happiness, to be heart-felt, must be permanent; nor is there a jot more meaning in our panting after allurements that lose their value the moment we can grasp them, than in those variety of toys that now offend and now delight the imagination of infancy. All enjoyment results from contrarieties. He that has been miserable, can best taste satisfaction, and *vice versa*. But to come to a proof: in one word, had the man chosen for my assistant turned out what I expected, I should have been rambling, in all probability, when important matters required my presence.

Camilla was ordered into the country, and could only snatch five minutes to bid my mother adieu. What a brave Conjuror! to know nothing of this misfortune untill communicated in the common mode of information. — Three months elapsed,

and no more was heard of her, for Cordelia was so fearful of incurring her father's displeasure, by betraying her attachment to the mother of his discarded clerk, that whilst she remained at his house, she never so much as wrote to us, and it was her advice that Camilla should follow her example, as superscriptions are apt to tell tales, and excite curiosity with respect to the contents of a letter. Mrs. Berkley, however, now thought fit to relieve my anxiety by making me a visit.

We meet, Sir, said she, at least speaking for myself, on better terms than we parted. Your oracles are not only explained, but explained to my utmost satisfaction; and I want now to consult you about the disposition of a young woman, in whose happiness I am warmly interested.

Imagining this was her favourite Lucinda, whose age was nearly the same as her cousin's, and sensible that her removal would contribute not a little to the convenience

nience of the family, I was profuse in bestowing affluence, honours, and felicity on her. Mrs. Berkley sat aghast. I was, however, so stupid as to mistake the cause of her emotions,, and persisted in assuring her that her young friend would be one of the happiest of women.

She left me without dropping a syllable that could give me a key to her sentiments, and I began to fear I had again been wrong. But what was my joy! my unspeakable surprize! when on Camilla's return to town, only a few days afterwards, I found I had a second time saved her from the very abyss of destruction.

A new lover had been provided for her, and she received most positive directions to prepare for their nuptials. At a distance from every friend, and hard pushed by every enemy, her situation was truly afflicting. She wept, she knelt, she besought in vain. In proportion as she manifested an aversion to the match, it

was promoted by her generous, her tender relations, and she began to fear, that no other alternative remained for her, than violating all her favourite principles; or marrying the man she hated.

As to the man, she could form no hopes of him; his nature was rough, and his mind uninformed. he had entered the army a private soldier, seen many battles, and seized his booty, whether from the dead, or dying, no matter which. His bravery, as it was called, obtained him in due time, a pair of colours, and his person recommending him to a girl of fortune at a country boarding school, he ran away with her, married her, by his ill treatment broke her heart, and made himself master of several thousands; then became a candidate for a new wife. Mr. Berkley, by some chance, after I left his compting-house, was appointed this hero's agent; and that connexion leading on by degrees to a social intercourse, my Camilla

milla caught his eye, his heart, and who, indeed, could have been proof against her charms? but as for the delicacy of consulting her inclinations, or the humanity of sparing her feeling; they were things he had never heard of, nor could have comprehended, and therefore, without farther preface or introduction, proposed himself to her relations for her husband.

In this perplexity, wholly hopeless and half expiring with apprehensions, did Mrs. Berkley arrive at her country seat for the purpose, as Camilla supposed, of winding up her misfortunes. Mrs. Berkley had, however, most happily altered her mind; she could on no account spare her niece, was sorry things had been carried so far, and heartily begged the captain's pardon. The captain was piqued, began to talk, and look very big; but when, as a proof that she did not mean to affront him, she offered him Miss Lucinda, with a fortune much superior to his vainest expectations, he thought himself

self a gainer by the exchange, and their nuptials were celebrated a few weeks afterwards.

Camilla was now more than ever at liberty to favour us with her company. Visits of ceremony, and visits of amusement engrossed the whole attention of her relations, whilst she was forgotten and neglected.

A sensible and delicate young woman is a most delightful companion. My mother was our guide, philosopher, and friend, gave us numberless anecdotes that enabled us to form a better judgment of life and human nature, and our felicity was reciprocal.

CHAP.

C H A P. XI.

The consequences of bad management. The biter bit ; with fresh matter of wonder for the reader.

MY partner, dissatisfied with the little consequence I made him of, expressed a desire to leave me. I warmly objected, and he as warmly remonstrated; he however at length informed me, that a woman who kept an inn had given him some encouragement, and that he wished to change his condition and renounce his profession in the same instant.

I now listened with pleasure, for I thought it my duty to prevent his ever doing any more mischief in the character of a fortune-teller. Having conversed therefore sometime on the subject, and heard his reasons, pro or con, I consented to be so far aiding and assisting, that if
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the lady made me a visit, he should exhibit his person in the glass. This was the very thing he had at heart; but that I might have nothing to charge myself with, I made it my business to inform myself, that this Dulcinea of his affections had neither such tender spirits, nor so tender a constitution, as to be exposed to the smallest danger in this union, but had, on all occasions, been remarkable for making her own part good. The visit was made, the decrees of the stars proved by the experiment of the glass, and the match was soon solemnized. As Camilla still persisted in her unaccountable fancy, that I should not say a tender thing to her because she visited at my house, I began to wish myself released from this disreputable profession, and established in an employment that might give me credit and consequence.

Now I was for buying a place in the Treasury, for in all court departments,
pro-

provided there is money no matter how great a wretch the man, and then set my heart on a sinecure in the customs ; but a place was only a personal provision, and I could not reconcile myself to the idea of living genteelly a few years, perhaps, when in all probability I might have a family whose distress, from narrow circumstances, would be so much the more aggravated, in proportion as they had experienced better days. Merchandize, therefore, at length appeared to me, with all its losses and casualties, the safest and most eligible track I could pursue, and it was settled between me and my mother, that I should lay out for an opportunity of beginning the world once more, and trust that Providence that had so amazingly favoured my undertakings.

Just at this particular juncture, I learned from Camilla's information, that Mrs. Berkley had continued to draw her husband into so much expence by visiting places of summer resort, playing at cards, dress,

dress, &c. that it was supposed his affairs were in a very perplexed state ; and to add to his misfortune, the indolence my very uncommon attention to the compting-house had contributed to cherish, was become so habitual that he was unable to shake it off, and could meet with no clerk to supply what I had been to him. My mother pointed out this as the lucky moment. Disappointment and chagrin, said she, may have taught him both prudence and humility ; and who knows, if you could throw yourself in his way without lessening your own importance, at a coffee-house for example, but he might make overtures to you that would enable you to confer an obligation on his family and introduce yourself into an advantageous partnership.

There was very little ceremony necessary for accommodating my affairs. When the reputation is once fixed, it was only retrenching the hours of attendance at the office,

office, and such was the good nature and infatuation of the public, that they would not have objected to actual midnight, rather than have lost the satisfaction of hearing their fate. This was a stroke of generalship of my mother's suggesting, for as we had known great difficulties, she thought we could not proceed with too great caution, and that till Mr. Berkley's disappointments were retrieved, and I situated as I could wish, it was best not to forego the business which ensured me so comfortable a subsistence.

It was not long before I put my design in execution, placed myself in the next box to my master, and without taking the least notice of him, for he was there when I entered, affected to amuse myself with my coffee and the news papers.

But though I was driven from Mr. Berkley's house in the extremest wrath, and though I had been forbid all intercourse with his family, so great a change had

had the change in his circumstances produced in his disposition, that the instant he perceived me he jumped up, shook me by the hand, intimated that all animosity was then at an end, invited me to come and see him, and professed much satisfaction in the rencounter.

Camilla was a stranger to my whole proceeding, for I could not but apprehend that her delicacy would have disapproved it, and as Mr. Berkley before we parted appointed the next day for my visit to his family, I took care to be punctual, though I had some little fears from the surprise it would be to his fair niece to see me restored to favour.

I no sooner presented myself, than Mr. Berkley called out to his wife, My dear, said he, here is Mr. Frank, who has had the good nature to call and ask us how we do, won't you step down and speak to him? The strange creature appeared, and instead of the haughty graces I had
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in the latter part of my connexion with her encountered, her face was dressed in smiles, and her behaviour all that can be imagined of aukward complaisance. And pray, Mr. Frank, how may you be situated? I told them that I traded a little for myself, had been in one or two computing houses since I left them, and had some distant thoughts of engaging myself a third time, when I could meet with an agreeable opportunity: they exchanged a significant glance, but fearful I suppose of making me of too much consequence, went no farther on this occasion, but desired I would dine with them the day following.

I continually watched the door, hoping, yet dreading to see Camilla, but notwithstanding I staid near two hours, my eyes were not blessed with a single glance of her; I went away somewhat in disconsolation.

On reflection however I thought myself much more fortunate than unfortunate; for by hearing I had been there, she would naturally be prepared for seeing me, whereas an accidental interview might have proved fatal to us both. Perceiving so clearly the purport of Mr. and Mrs. Berkley's conduct towards me, I thought it necessary on my part not to appear too obtainable; instead therefore of dining with them, which was intended I suppose as an honour, I sent an apology, and only produced myself when my more important avocations would admit.

Things turned out no less to my satisfaction than my expectation; proposals were made to me of re-engaging, which I condescended to accept under certain restrictions, such as that provided I took proper care of his business, I should choose my own hours for transacting it, and I felt myself a very happy man.

Camilla

Camilla was all astonishment when she heard I was in the compting house, for so secret had these kind relations been in their schemes, that not an intimation reached her, untill I had re-assumed my office of Clerk.

C H A P. XII.

The contrast. No heroism like petticoat heroism.

THE first opportunity we had of conversing together, she gently rebuked me for the necessity I had brought her under, of acting a disingenuous part. I exerted my utmost eloquence for the purpose of reconciling her to herself, but it would not do, and though she visited my mother as usual, for whom she professed a very singular regard, she seldom or never favoured me with her company. I complained of this shyness, but as she was supported by my mother in her peculiarities, there

there was no remedy, and I was obliged to submit. I found Mr. Berkley's affairs even worse than they had been represented. A kind of foreign partnership, in conjunction with his wife's ill management, was hurrying him on fast to destruction. He condescended to ask my advice, and had the good sense to follow it: it was therefore dissolved, though at a very great disadvantage at present, and his trade turned into quite a new channel.

I ventured to offer my little capital, provided I was granted a suitable portion of the business, but this offer was declined, merely I believe from policy, for Mr. Berkley knew I had too much spirit not to claim the character I was intitled to, and he was fearful he should not preserve my friendship, when I had a right to equality, in any degree so well as in my original capacity; and like the Turk he did not choose a brother near the throne.

I had

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I had the mortification day after day to hear the poor fortune-teller charged with villainy and deception from the unhappiness of Mrs. Berkley's darling child: but such in fact was the young lady's disposition, that had she been married to the most amiable man on earth, she would have rendered both him and herself wretched.

Finding there was no truth in fortune-tellers, and that the world's friendship rested wholly on prosperity, poor Mrs. Berkley was induced to seek comfort and consolation from a still more fallacious source, viz. drinking, and I beheld with unspeakable affliction Camilla's distress, as well for her aunt's reputation as the actual violences she sustained from her, when under this temporary frenzy. I had a thousand schemes as usual in my head for her deliverance, and was vain enough to suppose that by lifting her into the dignity of my wife, I should lift her to an

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eminence where insolence and necessity could not reach ; but however chimerical my imagination in this respect, or whatever lengths I felt myself capable of running to obtain her hand, I was too well acquainted with her notions, not to conform to them implicitly ;—and let me acknowledge, and I believe verily I shall speak the sense of the whole sex, that she only so much the more endeared herself to my good opinion by her adherence to propriety, though actually operating against my favourite wishes.

My mistress at those periods when intoxication was predominate would send for me—Ah ! Mr. Frank she would say what would I give you had never left us ! Had you but pushed for a share in Mr. Berkley's business some years ago, who can tell what might have happened ?—My Lucinda, my poor undone Lucinda possibly would then have been as happy as she is now unhappy, and you perhaps at the long run
become

become the head of our family;—but you never liked one another;—you was so fond of reading and stuff, Cordelia would have suited you best.

Madam, said I, in one evil hour you have still a relation unprovided for that:—What Camilla! exclaimed she; I am astonished at you! Camilla indeed! No, sir—my dear madam, I did not mean to offend you, nor do I see where is the presumption; you was condescendingly mentioning me in conjunction with one of your own daughters, surely then there could be no presumption—Mr. Frank, Mr. Frank, what a novice you must be! I am condemning your want of pride, not the practice of it; but let me ask you now—would you, if I was so mad as to consent, would you bring so awkward a creature as Camilla into importance, to shoulder me at my own table, and rival me wherever she appeared? O 'tis impossible! I assure you I rejoice much to see you again in our

compting-house, but she shall never have the remotest pretensions to being mistress of it; and so I will tell her, for she must have put you upon this!—a confident—

For God's sake, madam, said I, forget you ever heard such a thing mentioned—Miss Berkley you cannot surely imagine—Indeed but I can imagine every thing of Miss Berkley, and she shall out of this house, for I will have no upstarts, no rivals. I was as unable to comprehend the cause of her wrath, as I was unable to appease it, and the sweet Camilla received not only a severe lecture on my account, but would absolutely have been cast friendless and penniless on an unpitying world, if I had not happily observed that as Mr. Berkley could not but consider me as the cause of confusion in his family, if things were carried to extremities, I would certainly withdraw myself; for that an innocent jest of mine must not be attended with such serious consequences. This had
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the desired effect. Camilla was sent up to her room with orders never to appear but when sent for, and peace was restored in due time, to keep the interruption of it a secret from Mr. Berkley, though he soon after arrived. Camilla by my imprudence was not only abridged of her liberty in her aunt's family, but wholly excluded from the possibility of visiting my mother. I could have beat my head with vexation, but it would not have availed me, and I at length concluded (which proved to be the case) that the best means of blowing the storm over, was to seem to bear no remembrance of it.

Mrs. Berkley still continued her custom of making me her companion at periods when she ought rather to have shunned every human eye; but so stupid a fellow did she find me, that until, in the person of the fortune-teller, she gave me a clew to her conduct, I had not the least conception of its meaning.

My master, from the inconveniencies of his affairs, had made himself so unhappy, that his health was visibly affected. Yet so great a change had this propensity to drinking wrought on the mind of his once really affectionate wife, that she beheld it rather with pleasure than concern, and from considering me in the light of a very industrious and a very successful fellow, (not to say a word of any personal advantages) marked me down in her own mind for her second husband. In this manner, visiting me one day in my public character, did she open the affair to me.

I am come, said she, the third time for the double purpose of accusing, and consulting you. My child, who you assured me should be so happy, is beyond measure wretched, and I want to know whether I shall have a second husband.

To your first part of speech I reply, said I, that it is your daughter's disposition, not her circumstances, that renders her unhappy.

happy. Too cruelly indulged from her infancy, her wayward humour is now become incapable of gratification, and you must confess that it is ever the thing she has not, that is in her opinion the very thing necessary to please and satisfy her. Well, well, said she impatiently, let that pass; but pray as to myself what hopes can you give me?

You have, madam, one husband already, and can you wish the stars should provide you another?

You are rude, Sir, said she, but I will not be trifled with; if you have any supernatural skill, I need not tell you that the husband you mention is almost broken hearted, and that the one I would require is an agreeable young fellow, who stands a fair chance of succeeding him in his business.

It now, for the first time, occurred to me that I was the man. I therefore

wrapped myself up for the better concealment of my mirth and surprize, and then asked her if her favourite's name was not Frank ? Her eyes sparkled with joy, as she answered me in the affirmative, and she added, can you not shew him me in the glass ?

This was a very ill timed request to a conjuror in my situation ; I therefore was obliged to shift the point, and reply, that I could shew her any particular person she wished for, whether father, mother, sister, brother, or friend, but then I could shew them merely as at her desire, but if she would favour me with another visit, I would calculate her nativity, and then, from proceeding in a quite different manner, enable myself to shew her her future husband. This shallow device took, and I gained time for contrivance and recollection. It was moreover agreed, that her next visit should be a casual one, in order to give the stars fair

fair play. It was my mother's opinion that as this strange woman had got Camilla and me in her head, she deserved to be deceived as well for her own punishment, as to preserve the peace of her family ; for that if I did not present myself in the glass for her second husband, she would infallibly revert to her suspicions, that I was destined for Camilla, and treat her with the most undue cruelty.

I entreated my worthy predecessor to favour me with his company a week or so on business of consequence ; and that Mrs. Berkley might not take us in an unguarded moment, he offered to give his attendance until her visit was over. Thus we seemed to put it out of probability, that this great manœuvre should fail of its desired success.

Mrs. Berkley's curiosity brought her still earlier than I could have imagined to my closet. My old master told her the usual tale, as that it depended upon the

H 5 strength

strength of her sight rather than his power to distinguish the object. In a word, when he conceived I was ready, and had worked her up to the desired infatuation, he placed her in the proper attitude for meeting my eyes, which, after his awful invocation, she did to her abundant satisfaction. It is him ! exclaimed this foolish woman ; it is he himself ! and Mr. Conjuror, I am your very humble servant. But pray, before I depart, answer me one question, how long will it be before my second marriage ? Two years, replied my master. Hum, said she, in a peculiar manner that denoted no very extraordinary satisfaction, and thought proper to return home.

C H A P. XIII.

Gloomy, moral and unentertaining ; but, unless perused, many subsequent passages must be wholly unintelligible to the reader.

ON repairing to the compting-house the ensuing evening, I was told Mrs. Berkley desired my company in the dining-room. I was obliged to attend ; but how greatly was I surprized to find Camilla of the party, who was permitted to walk at large, and converse even with me on the most friendly terms ! for such was the lady's strong faith in the stars, as to think it impossible for her niece to controvert their decrees.

Cordelia and her husband now came to visit us. I own I was such a puppy as to be sorry for her, from an idea that it could neither be proper nor eligible for a married woman to be cast in the way of

a man she had once tenderly loved, however hopeless that passion had been, and from that very hopelessness surmounted. Mrs. Moleworth, however, taught me the difference between friendship and impropriety; her behaviour was easy and unaffected. Mr. Frank had declaredly her approbation, but her husband, it was apparent, had her affection; and as her feelings, both with respect to the one and the other, were such as they ought to be, they operated spontaneously on her conduct, and rendered me quite as collected as herself. I cannot help observing, as a hint to less informed or less discerning ladies, that as a wife, her behaviour was most exemplary, without any ridiculous fondness; her husband was the everlasting object of her attention; if he spoke, she listened with pleasure; if he was silent, she just consulted his looks as to the cause, and appeared perfectly satisfied; she moreover possessed the art of making him of consequence, without being negligent or
rude

rude to the rest of the company ; and as her actions were the joint result of duty and inclination, she never conceived any parade necessary to point out their excellence to even the most common observers. Such was Cordelia. Her sister, from being diametrically opposite in her disposition, was diametrically opposite in her conduct. Her husband's conversation, she did not scruple to own, was irksome to her. If he presumed to disapprove of any particular part of her dress, he was sure to be told it was her fancy : if he objected to an acquaintance, that acquaintance was instantly constituted her first favourite : if he laughed, she called him a fool ; if he was grave, she called him sullen ; and if he was offended at the liberties she took with him, she proclaimed him a madman. If they sat down to a card-table together, they were sure to expose themselves and disturb the whole company ; and yet, notwithstanding all this strange caprice and ill-humour, which one would have imagined

gined proceeded from absolute dislike to the man, she was beyond measure jealous if he was only polite to any other female, and would take an early opportunity to affront her. It is true, the captain was in no degree a valuable character, but he had either too much sense or too much art not to be tender of appearances. Besides, with respect to his wife, he had ties of interest, which were much stronger in his estimation than the ties of gratitude or honour. He believed the Berkleys in much better circumstances than they really were, and flattered himself he should receive, in right of their daughter, a child's part at their death. But such, nevertheless, was her aggravating behaviour at times, that all his prudence and all his resolution were insufficient to secure him from breaking out, when the whole house was in an instant flame.

Mr. Berkley, notwithstanding by my great diligence he saw his affairs once more
in

in a thriving state, continued to droop and droop, until, no longer able to keep up, he was confined wholly to his apartment.

His wife, when perfectly sober, shed unfeigned tears for his condition, but when the too free circulation of the glass had perverted her reason, his sufferings were her jest, and she boldly proclaimed her wishes and intentions in case of survivorship.

Inebriety is perhaps one of the most deforming vices in the masculine character, but when women fall into it, not an excellence of soul or body can remain: the features become swollen; the complexion is destroyed; the memory is impaired; the voice rendered odious; with a thousand other enormities, which can alone be conceived by those who have been spectators of them, and cannot with propriety be described.

Mrs.

Mrs. Berkley was, nevertheless, weak enough to believe, that the splendid distinction of being my master's widow would captivate me, and fix me her's.

I trembled hourly as an eclaircissement approached, and was sincerely affected by the progress of my master's dissolution: for though he had lived vainly, he died rationally; and though unknowing in all the punctilios, the elegancies of life, possessed the necessary wisdom for fitting himself for his awful change, and rested his hopes on the bosom of his God.

One morning, about seven o'clock, he sent for me into his apartment.—My dear Frank, said he, pressing my hand, you have been a father to my family: success awaits your undertakings, and you deserve to be successful. I would long since have given you a share in my business, but my wife opposed it. We have lived together above five-and-twenty years, and I owe her some indulgence, as you yourself will grant,

grant, when I tell you, that it was marrying her that made my fortune. I shall not, however, now consult her. I know what is her best interest, and it shall be promoted. I have therefore appointed you chief executor, and left my trade equally between you ; but with this clause, for I am sensible of her temper, and need not be told, that there are difficulties enough in the prosecution of business, without having any thing to do with whims and absurdities, that the management of it shall be all your own ; and may Heaven be propitious to your honest efforts ! I could not reply.—You are a valuable fellow, said he, and it was my misfortune to be too self-important some years ago to perceive it. But you see the end of all. The view of eternity gives a new complexion to our thoughts, and teaches us at once to be just, benevolent, and grateful. What has passed, resumed he, after some little pause, must be a secret. On your discretion, on your principles I rely, and shall die

die satisfied. I communicated this agreeable piece of intelligence to my mother, received her congratulations, and looked up with humble hope to my Camilla.

Camilla, though it was impossible she should be ignorant of her aunt's schemes with respect to me, never hinted a thing of the kind to my mother. It is true, indeed, she could have no apprehensions of my entering into so preposterous an union; and yet, when she recollected the extravagancies daily committed by ambitious young fellows, as she had no idea of the contents of her uncle's will, it was astonishing she could have so much command of herself, as neither to enquire nor complain on the occasion.

When Mr. Berkley's will was read, my ear was agreeably struck with the name of Camilla; but how was I mortified and disappointed when I heard, that instead of a happy independency, she had no other provision assigned her than the interest of her

her three hundred pounds; the principal to be paid her on the day of marriage only, and that too on condition that it was with her aunt's consent. Thus are mankind generous and repentant by halves. Mr. Berkley, for a slight injustice done me, was forward to make atonement, in the same moment that a lovely-girl, who had devoted her life to the service of his family, was left still in cruel bondage; though he could not but be sensible how much she had to fear from the tyranny of her aunt, and the insolent spirit of one of her cousins. Remonstrances would have been ineffectual; and Mr. Berkley, under the above described predicament, breathed his last.

C H A P. XIV.

An ugly likeness of common wives. Conscience a never-failing monitor. An experiment in the small way.

MRS. Berkley, who had drank and wept, and wept and drank, during the whole night, was incapable of attending the opening of the will until late the next evening. But there was no concealing her chagrin when she discovered, that instead of having it in her power to confer an obligation on me, I was made so wholly independent of her, that if she consulted her own interest, she must consult my humour on all future occasions.

Poor Camilla shook her head when the passage was read respecting her, and Mrs. Berkley's eyes were instantly cast on her with a malignant satisfaction, as much as
to

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to say, she was happy that one helpless wretch still remained at her mercy.

When the funeral affairs were all settled, I persuaded Mrs. Berkley to go into the country for a few weeks, that I might have leisure to collect the debts, and bring every thing into a proper train. Camilla was commanded to attend her, and my heart was beyond measure depressed at the bare idea of what she must suffer. It was however impossible to prosecute business in the house with Mrs. Berkley; and it would have been frantic to oppose her power over her niece; and I was compelled to see her depart without once complaining.

I could not help observing to my mother, how strikingly I was called to experience, that the situation I conceived would render me most happy was always productive of misery, and that events that were derived upon me unexpectedly were alone what I ought to have wished for. I
had

had therefore the wonderful humility to confess, that Providence was much wiser than me.

I now began to prepare my customers by degrees for my total disappearance. My hours of attendance were reduced only to two in a day ; and when I had some little leisure, I ventured to make an excursion or two to Mrs. Berkley's country house, where my Camilla was immured. But the generous lady, suspecting my motives, took care to disappoint me ; nor for three long months did I obtain a single sight of the lovely captive.

Mrs. Berkley was, however, at length called off from her tyranny by the ill health of her beloved Lucinda, who in a fit of perverseness, after dancing the greatest part of the evening, would drink a quantity of cold water ; a circumstance that not only affected her constitution, but rendered her a frightful object.

Bath

Bath was recommended as the final recipe. Mrs. Berkley declared her resolution of attending her, and my hopes began to revive. She was, however, too uniform in her proceedings to leave one step untaken that could punish her dependents, and Camilla was dragged down on this melancholy journey.

My mother, one afternoon that I was at Mrs. Berkley's after this new mortification, received a visit from her young friend Miss Sedgmore. She brought a little present in her hand, called my mother her guardian angel, and confessed to her, that, with a single impediment, she had the prospect of being happily as well as advantageously settled. My uncle, continued she, Madam, has lived from his infancy in great families: he is now head steward to Lord Milbank, and has secured a very handsome fortune. On the death of my poor father, when he was sensible I was wholly unprovided for, he did not
remember

remember there was such a person in the world; but since by your kind assistance I have rose into a little fame, and he finds I can live genteelly without his assistance, he not only deigns to acknowledge me, but declares he will make me his heir. The young fellow who has had the generosity to offer to take me without a shilling is in trade, and my infatuated uncle will needs have me marry a gentleman. But I cannot help thinking, if I could contrive any means of bringing him acquainted with you, that you could persuade him to be both kind and reasonable.

My mother thanked her for the good opinion she entertained of her eloquence, but told her, she fancied the disease was not within cure; but that she was however most ready to make the experiment, if Miss Sedgmore could contrive to give her an opportunity.

It is whimsical enough, replied she, and perhaps you who are so very moral may
condemn

condemn me, but I should now have been a mean and miserable dependant, if I had not visited a fortune-teller in this neighbourhood.

A fortune-teller! cried my mother—yes, madam, a fortune-teller. I was prepared for your thinking me absurd, but upon my honour he not only put me upon the little employment I am engaged in, but foretold all the pleasure and advantage of my acquaintance with you. You smile, madam, but there are times, and this is one of them, when the circumstance affects my mind in such a manner that I am obliged to mention it; and so I told my uncle this morning when I breakfasted with him by invitation, and he appeared half angry with me for my folly and credulity.

My mother was convinced in her own mind, by some farther particulars she picked out of her young friend, that however her uncle might laugh at her folly, he

had caught it, and would make an early visit to the fortune-teller himself. But as I attended only once a day, there was no necessity for giving me an extra intelligence, as she was sure of our meeting in the evening. She had quite forgot, that Lord Milbank was the nobleman with whom I lived in the capacity of house-steward; and from the desire we had to be serviceable to so worthy a girl, we both rejoiced at this little intimation; for there could be no doubt but my knowledge of the family would enable me to appear a very penetrating person.

According to my mother's presentiment, the very next day brought Miss Sedgmore's uncle to my apartment. But I was infinitely surprized, when, instead of a stranger, the door opened, and presented me with my old friend, who had not only recommended me to my Lord, but got me discharged for being found guilty of too much honesty for my occupation. By
 way

way of innocent revenge, I therefore resolved to probe his conscience to the quick, and in order to induce him to make his niece happy, alarm him with the idea that his life would be a short one.

He was startled. Sir, continued I, we are alone, and you must forgive me, if, speaking for the stars, I speak very freely. He told me I was very welcome, and seemed prepossessed in favour of my skill.

You are then, Sir, said I, a steward, and to be plain with you, I can perceive an unjust one. He subscribed to my first assertion, but it was evident he did not altogether so willingly subscribe to the second—But let me tell you, you are by no means so close in your proceedings as you imagine; and unless you can contrive to make retribution, your Lord will detect, expose, and punish you.

And who, said he, are you, who dare to talk to me in this language?—I'll have

you trounced, Sir; there are such things as acts of parliament—Yes, replied I, and there is such a person in the world as Lord Milbank, who is a peer of the realm, and will not permit one villain to escape any more than another. Come, come, Sir, said I, it is absurd to quarrel with your fate; I can point out living evidences of your guilt:—was you not the cause of depriving an honest young fellow of his bread, only because he spurned your diabolical doctrines?—did you not?—

Hold, said he, I must be known by some person who has given you this intelligence. Where, and when? replied I. To your certain knowledge, I have not quitted this closet since you entered it, and that no person besides yourself has been admitted—I see, I see it all, said he, and verily believe you to be the conjurer you profess yourself—but tell me, cried he wildly, what can I do?

Retire

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Retire on your already too plentiful provision; help your Lord to some just person in your place; and neither suffer his estate to be pared, or exactions to be committed on his trades-people for the future: live a life of generosity and probity, and I can give you hope of a long and happy period; for shame and disgrace, rather than any distemper, will otherwise shorten your days. You have, moreover, a-niece, the daughter of your sister: whilst your countenance would have been useful to her, you never took any notice of her; but now that she has an opportunity of disposing of herself to advantage, because the man has neither a taudry shoulder-knot, nor a paltry scarf, you declare you will not bestow a shilling on her, if she marries him. Consider this, and be wise; happiness is not confined to either this or that situation, and it is in vain that we sacrifice to externals, for they can give us only empty satisfactions. Do all this, and self-applause shall be yours. He slipped a bit of gold

into my hand, and retired with precipitation.

I was however unspeakably shocked, when I understood, through my mother's intimacy with Miss Sedgmore, that her uncle was confined to his bed in a high fever; that he was frequently delirious, and accused himself of crimes in those distressful moments, of which even his greatest enemies acquitted him. My mother, however, comforted me, and told me that I might be assured, as my designs were so unimpeachable, it would all in the end work together for good.

C H A P. XV.

Perturbation and irresolution the concomitants of youthful schemes.

MRS. Berkley had not been long at Bath before, on the physician's pronouncing her daughter's disease to be a confirmed leprosy, she sent me word she should return home. I told my mother, that I was resolved to live no longer in suspense, for that, on the lady's return to town, I would openly avow my love for Camilla, and either obtain or forfeit her for ever; because, as I asked nothing but herself, it was false delicacy to render me, if she had really any regard for me, unhappy. My mother bid me proceed with caution, but confessed herself in a great degree of my opinion, that the uncertainty I laboured under must be more painful than any certainty whatsoever.

Mrs. Berkley wept when she gave me an account of her daughter, and I began to conceive, that as she appeared to be perfectly sober, her own distresses would teach her feeling, and that I should find it the lucky moment.

Madam, said I therefore, I condole with you most heartily on this occasion, and lament that yours is an affliction beyond the reach of friendship or the possibility of assistance. Had I the power, how happy should you instantly become!

You are very good, indeed, Mr. Frank, and I am on many accounts much indebted to you.

Talk not so, madam; to serve you in my present situation is my pleasure; but—but, madam, you might constitute it my duty.

Ah! cried she, what is it you mean?

Only

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Only consent to make me happy with Camilla, and you may command me.

Mr. Frank, said she, bridling with resentment, spare me, I beseech you, on that head. I have already told you my sentiments, my resolutions, and I am astonished that you dare to mention her.

Dare to mention her, madam ! said I, with a look she had not been accustomed to—it is time, then, to enquire into the merits of my doings. We will break hands. My master was so generous as to leave it in my power to renounce his family when they treated me unworthily : that time is come, and I have done with it.

Cruel, base man, said she, bursting into tears, and is it thus you fulfil your promises to my poor, dear departed husband ? You the father of his family ! you are their destroyers, and we shall not have bread to eat.

I 5

Madam !

Madam ! madam ! I served Mr. Berkeley faithfully, before you effected our separation. You well know the situation of his affairs when I was prevailed upon to engage with him a second time ; I have been the labouring oar for his, for you, and for your children's emoluments ; you compel me to become a boaster, but surely, surely I merit some little reward.

Any thing but my niece, said she, ask any thing but my niece, and it shall be granted you ; but it never shall be said that she married the man I had once thought to honour with my hand. She is in my power, sir, and I will keep her ; and I know what headstrong damsels, and bold spirited men are capable of ; but you have seen the last of her, and that you may give yourself no unnecessary trouble, be assured your letters, if you write, shall be all intercepted, nor shall she ever hear of you again.

Is there no terms of accommodation ?
No, Sir, replied she, none that my saucy
niece

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niece can be a party to; and so you may flounce and bounce as much as you please, the law is on my side, and equity can never be on yours.

And what law, madam, can authorize you to deprive a young woman of her liberty?

My own will, said this fiend, and if I am called upon to exert myself, know, I will die in a gaol before I will deliver her up; that is person for person: shew me the law that can go farther.

I now felt myself compleatly undone. Wretch that I am! cried I; thus it is that I am at length fallen! I must brave the woman I ought to have outwitted, and with all my folly on my head, and grief in my heart, go home and involve my mother in this my last and most insupportable of calamities.

My mother endeavoured to compose me, but it was impossible. I will never

enter Mrs. Berkley's door again, cried I, unless I am allowed to satisfy myself that Camilla is safe; nor ever, on any account, resume my lying profession, for it is that which has brought me to this destruction.

Frank, said my mother, I will not be insulted; it was with my advice that you became a fortune-teller, and under my direction, have made yourself useful to thousands. However, young man, you may take the sum you are master of, and set up as you think proper for yourself; and depend upon it, your mother will be no further incumbrance to you; she has never yet received a kindness from him that thought meanly of her.

O my mother! do not thus crush me to the dust; my mind is torn even to distraction. But I never had a disrespectful or undutiful sensation; pardon, therefore, my involuntary offence, and speak me into peace.

My

My life, said my mother, fond, foolish boy! has been martyred by disappointments, but when I turned my eyes towards you, I patiently submitted; you was my comfort, my blessing, my whole dependance; don't let me see tears, however, we have both of us been wrong, and our forgiveness must be mutual.

You talk, said my mother, when we were somewhat composed, of renouncing a character which is the only means left you of rising superior to your misfortunes. With respect to Mrs. Berkley, use your own discretion, secure your property, and leave her, if you please, to smart for her folly, and fix your hopes on your profession, which has brought you so far through with safety, and will, I am persuaded, never fail you.

C H A P. XVI.

The turnings and windings of fate. The Fortune-Teller no Conjuror. A tale, which must interest or not interest the reader, according to the natural construction of his soul.

IN order to wipe every trace of dissatisfaction from my mother's heart, I attended at my office with very unusual alacrity; and, having dispatched a succession of common customers, was surprized by a visit from Lord Milbank himself.

He looked somewhat stern as he entered, but, on taking a seat, melancholy alone dwelt on his countenance; and I endeavoured to recollect all I had seen and heard at his house, in order to support the Conjuror's character.

Having drawn the usual lines, Sir, said I, your life has been an unhappy one; a
tender

tender attachment, a hopeless one, I believe, has proved the bane of every satisfaction you would otherwise have tasted, and it is only the hope of being re-united to this beloved object that renders your existence supportable.

Sir, said he, this is, I confess, coming pretty near the mark; but all this you might have heard from people who know my little history. I am, however, taught to expect other proofs of your powers, and therefore let us come to the point at once.

I touched a spring, to give them notice it was a consequential person, and that their utmost attention must be exerted to pick up intelligence.

Of what nature, said I, with some little emotion, for there was somewhat in his looks that alarmed me, are the satisfactions you require?

O!

O! your servant, Mr. Conjuror!—So I am first to tell you, and then you will tell me—but I will have patience.—You cannot raise the dead, said he, sighing and staring earnestly at me.

No, sir, but I can shew you any person living you may have a desire to see.

Thou impostor, muttered he between his teeth—and though no coward, I could not help casting my eyes on his sword, and apprehending I knew not what.

There is a person, cried he—could you shew me her, I would give you half my estate—but suppose you try.

Is it man or woman?

Can that information be necessary, replied he, for a conjuror? You shall, however, receive every assistance from me; it is a woman, and not a young woman.

Suppose you give me leave, said I, in order to gain time, to cast her nativity.

He

He gave me her age, forty-four; and I, following what I conceived to be the proper clue, told him she had passed through innumerable difficulties, but that she was still alive and well, and that he would soon see her.

He caught me by the collar—Wretch, said he, thus it is that you drive many to destruction. I now no longer wonder at the state into which you have thrown my steward; for it is plain you know his family—you know mine—and I will shake you to atoms, if you do not this instant confess to me all your guilt and villainy.

My Lord, said I, I do know you; but wherefore do you think yourself justified in calling me impostor? Bring me to proof. Make the experiment of my skill by looking in the glass, and if afterwards—

Be it so, said he; I will give even a villain all imaginable latitude: but I will secure

secure the door; and now, sir, I am ready.

I was seized with such a trembling, that I thought I should have sunk at his feet; but trusting that a view in the glass might soften him, I had the courage and the strength to ascend the chair, to read as usual; and my mother, who had overheard all, with equal trepidation made her appearance.

God of my salvation! cried he, it is she, it is my child!—Oh! stay, oh! stay, produce her, said he, to me.—It is my child—my senses are not imposed upon; she is there in that apartment, cried he, and unless she is produced, this sword (drawing it) shall transfix thy wretched body.

No longer able to contain herself, my mother now pushed aside the sliding shutter—Have pity, sir, have mercy—My poor deserted girl! cried my Lord—My long lamented Maria!—You are my child,
my

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my child!—Oh! nature, nature!—Do you feel no emotions? Has not a father's voice the power of touching your heart?

I am—I am—said my mother, fainting in Lord Milbank's arms.

My good Lord, said I, trust not to this illusion; it is my mother you honour with the name of your child. We are all impostors, but not villainous ones. Necessity and the folly of the world has put us upon this species of ingenuity. Moderate your transports; my mother can never be your relation.

Away! away! cried he, I have found her, and will snatch her from the jaws of—Heavens! can she be infamous? Has she been bred to the trade of falsehood?—But she speaks, and I shall be no longer deceived. Tell me, madam, what is your name?

Maria—I thank thee, Father of mercies! I thank thee!—Where was you born?—

I

I cannot tell you, but a charity-school gave me education. You are my child, said he ; I proclaim, I acknowledge you to be such, and will not be undeceived. Your age is forty-four ; and your features—this picture identifies your features.—Tell me, tell me all you know of yourself.

My mother gave him a faithful and succinct detail of her whole life ; mentioned me in terms that diffused brightness over his whole countenance ; but begged he would be well informed before he took us under his protection, as the consequence might be fatal if he should discover himself in an error.

It cannot be—You are my child, said he, nor will I admit the thought—The immediate hand of Providence led me to this spot. I came to punish what I believed a bad member of the community, for depriving my steward of his reason ; but I now find it is conscience that is doing its own work, and I hope he will become collected :

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collected: you would perhaps, however, wish I should give you some account of those accidents, which have laid the foundation of this blessed meeting.

When only a very young man, the daughter of my tutor, whose name was Maria, became the object of my tenderest affections. Mr. Needham, for that was his name, was, though a good-natured man, inconceivably rigid in what he conceived to be essentials. Conscious as I was of my honourable intention, and your dear, lovely mother of her purity, he discovered our growing inclinations; and after severely reprimanding us both, wrote to my father, and intreated he would take me home.

As soon as I was gone, he entered more largely into the affair with his daughter, and told her, it was his fixed determination to live no longer than he could live with honour; that as all the world would suspect him of helping to draw in his pupil, if she ever corresponded with me, or

suffered the matter to proceed farther, she must prepare herself for the consequences.

The timid, the gentle Maria was ready to expire before him: she knew the tenderness, the strength of my passion, and the firmness of her father's resolutions: to be destroyer of either of the persons, therefore, that were so dear to her, was beyond means distressing; but she did not hesitate to restore him to tranquillity, by assurances that his will should be her law. She nevertheless little knew what she was promising. Love and soft persuasion are generally too powerful for the youthful heart; and as there was no other means of keeping me within the bounds of reason, than by tolerating, she referred me to an aunt, and under her sanction we corresponded for several months. This aunt was naturally ambitious, a happy feature, as I conceived it, in her character; and I so contrived to engage her in my interest, that she called her brother a fool and a madman, and
I offered

offered to follow me as far as I was disposed to lead in the road of honour. At my request, therefore, she invited Maria to her house; at my request she urged my suit in the warmest terms with her; and at length, though with much difficulty, prevailed upon her to give me her hand before I set off on my tour of Europe, a step prescribed by her austere father.

We were married; a poor clergyman, to whom I promised two handsome livings on my estate as soon as I had the power of bestowing them, performing the ceremony. But instead of setting out, as Maria was told, the next hour for the continent, I continued to visit her disguised for near six weeks before we finally separated. Her aunt died soon after, and Maria was compelled to return to the house of her father. In a few months, however, it became necessary for her to find a hiding-place. Her father was not a man to be trusted with so important a secret; and she resolved to elope,

elope, and incur every species of disgrace, rather than encounter his resentment. In this scheme she was prevented: the packing up of some little articles gave the alarm; her father, with unrelenting severity, extorted the secret from her, and then spurned her out of his house. Five guineas was all the little stock she was possessed of. A stage coach passing by, just in the moment that she felt herself without home or friend, she put herself into it, and arrived in London the next evening. But she wrote me not these particulars, till she wrote what she called her farewell letter, which was a fortnight after you was born; when the circumstance getting air, as your poor mother died during her confinement, you was disposed of, nobody could tell how or where, long before my return to England. But on my avowing my marriage, and insisting upon your being produced, a parish register was shewn me of your death, and I was obliged to submit to my destiny. To add to my
distress

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distress (and I verily believe by Mr. Needham's suggestion) my father at this period, so peculiarly unwelcome, proposed a wife to me of his own choosing.

I professed an utter disinclination to a change of condition; it was treated with ridicule. I begged to be indulged in my residence under his roof; a request which he said should be readily granted, as there was sufficient room for him, me, and an agreeable daughter-in-law. I was then driven upon a thousand little subterfuges, which, if not mean, were certainly dissingenuous; but all did not avail, and I found myself reduced to the disagreeable alternative, either to confess the situation of my heart, or to affect a compliance with his wishes. The lady picked out for me on this occasion, had every recommendation that could be required; a lovely person, an accomplished mind, and a large fortune; but in proportion to the immense catalogue of her merits, I felt my-

self distressed, until the idea struck me, to make a friend where it was intended I should have found a mistress. Fraught with this resolution, I told my father that his kindness had left me nothing to ask, and his care nothing to object; and I was therefore ready to pay my respects to the lady.

He was transported by this concession, relying, as he most reasonably might, on the lady's charms to do the rest.

But, how, my children, shall I describe to you the agonies I endured when ushered into the parlour where I was destined to play the lover! Your mother's image haunted my mind so powerfully, and the tender scenes we had enjoyed, occurred so forcibly, that I was near sinking lifeless on the floor, and consequently terrified the amiable creature, whom I even now mention with the greatest esteem, beyond expression. Perceiving that she was about to ring for assistance, I told her in the best manner

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manner I was able, that I should be better in a few moments: that I had for some time been subject to such sudden indispositions, but that their continuance was short, and in no degree alarming. I then seated myself at her request, and a profound silence ensued.

The lady had address and penetration very uncommon to her time of life and sex. She viewed me with much attention; and at length, finding that though I made several efforts, I remained unable to speak, said, with a smile, Will you give me leave, sir, to be the interpreter of your thoughts? I will consult your looks for the truth of my conclusions, and having summed up the whole, we will settle it to our mutual satisfaction. I bowed assent, and she began. This visit, so far from being a visit of choice, is the result of compulsion; I am your father's election, not yours; but such is the unpersuadableness of his humour, that nothing less

would content him than a compliance that your heart refuses. I beg, sir, you will answer me upon the word of a man of honour, have I not hit the mark? I cannot deny, madam—It is enough, sir, and I am happy to have it in my power to relieve you from such vexatious restraint.

My father is as indulgent as yours has been the reverse. On this occasion he bid me receive one visit from you, and then consult my own heart; for that his wishes would be perfectly in unison with mine. You will excuse me then if I represent you quite the reverse of what I believe you if you was to appear in your natural character, as such representation will be a sufficient reason with him for breaking hands with your father. Can I be farther serviceable? I was so struck with the generosity and good sense of a woman whom I had tacitly, as it were, affronted, that I opened my whole soul to her. She joined her friendly tear to mine,

mine, promised to make even personal enquiries after my child'; and at last it was concluded between us, that we should continue the acquaintance until it was no longer useful to me, as there was now no danger of its being disagreeable to either party.

The lady kept her word; and though her enquiries were far from meeting with the desired success, yet I am satisfied her advice was of great service to me in assisting me to compose my agitated mind.

Secure in my honour and property, confident in his daughter's prudence, our acquaintance, though it was not much of the lover-like kind, was permitted without dissatisfaction from either family. It was indeed observed by the servants, that except for a few moments we much rather chose to be in mixed companies than *tête-à-tête*; for, as I could not conceive myself justified in abusing the indulgence of

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any one, I forbore any compliments except such as would involuntarily escape me whenever the fatal affair was to be the topic.

Thus six months passed away, when my father began to grow very inquisitive as to the termination of our intercourse. I told him frankly, that I admired the lady's person and revered her mind, but that I found I had some difficulties to surmount; for that though I had always reason to believe myself a welcome visitor, I had little or no encouragement to look forward to the character of a husband. My father was offended, called her behaviour idle, capricious, and said he would take an early opportunity to ask her father his opinion of our foolery, as I should not spend the best of my days in dancing attendance on any man's daughter in creation. This hint struck me all on a heap; and I just ventured to remonstrate against the rapidity of his proceeding. I had,
I told

I told him, carried my heart to this lady by his commands, but that I would not promise to be equally obedient in recalling it; for that I did not believe it possible to look on her like again. The old peer was affected, but in such a manner as I did not desire; for he resolved to engage his friend to enter warmly into the matter, and add his influence to my merit for gaining the lady.

Not to dwell, however, on what may appear to you an uninteresting part of my history, I will only add that we were so dexterous as to keep my father amused with the hopes of our union, until Heaven was pleased to call him off by a tedious fit of illness from every temporal consideration.

This noble-minded woman did not even here forsake me. Her visits were the visits of humanity; they softened my confinement, confirmed my resignation, and brought me through a very severe task

with chearfulness and piety. Yet amidst all that happened to exercise my feelings and engage my attention, still the fate of my Maria, and the uncertainty I was under about my child, was ever my keenest distress.

The lady, however, paid dear for the generous concern she took in my affairs. Gloomy as I was, her heart became prepossessed in my favour; and her concealment of that prepossession cost her her life. This she confessed to me in our last meeting, which was, at her request, a few hours before she died, leaving me her whole fortune, as a token, she said, of an attachment that was neither unworthy of her heart, nor altogether unworthy of my approbation. Forgive me, my children; but this tear is due to the memory of her by whose kindness I was enabled to live to see this blessed day; and I will now return to your grandfather.

Mr.

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Mr. Needham would never see me during his health; but within these three months sent for me, forgave me, and told me he had reason to believe you was alive; and that the people to whose care he had committed you had made a property of you for the sake of a little money, as they were no where to be found, and he was unable to trace out the child: but, continued this very extraordinary man, you had the inhumanity to rob me of my only child, my peace and my fame; you will not surely bring the loss of an infant into competition with such complicated cruelty: but forgive me as I forgive you.—I closed his eyes, but till this happy meeting have never known composure. However, I have at length found out the wretches that abandoned my poor helpless babe: they are in Ireland, and alive, and shall be eye-witnesses of my felicity.

C H A P.

C H A P. XVII.

The author's best bow and last speech. The merits to be tried by the reader.

Notwithstanding all we could urge to the contrary, my Lord took us home with him, had my mother's picture drawn, and the picture of my grandmother, by many different masters, who all pronounced the features to be the same.

I was now under much perplexity. If proved the grandson of an earl, should I be allowed to marry my Camilla? But my doubts on this head were soon cleared up.—I am reunited to you, my children, said his Lordship, to reward your virtue, and I will live only for your happiness.

As Mrs. Berkley was not to be brought to concessions, I recommended the young fellow who was upper clerk for my successor, left him my property to trade with
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on trust, and at length told him the secret of my heart. Camilla was closely confined at the country-house, but he undertook to get a letter conveyed to her.

After two tedious months had elapsed, for I was fearful of indulging my joy, lest disgrace and disappointment should await me, the wretches, as my grandfather called them, arrived from Ireland, produced the church-wardens who had put my mother in the charity-school, and gave every convincing testimony of her identity. My Lord then turning to me said, it is well, my boy, you are not an ambitious fellow; the clergyman who married your grandmother is dead, nor can I produce a single person to attest our marriage. My title will therefore devolve to my heir at law; but if a fine fortune, and your beloved Camilla's hand can make you amends, they shall be yours.

The reader will imagine what kind of reply I should make to such an address;
and

and my grandfather had the goodness himself to wait on Mrs. Berkley, with proper authority, to demand the young lady, who was unlawfully secreted in her house.

Mrs. Berkley's meanness of soul, however, saved him the trouble of proceeding to extremities. The name of a Lord she was not able to stand, and therefore, producing her niece, sneaked away, to hide herself from the reproaches she was conscious she merited.

Lord Milbank, with great tenderness, enquired into the state of Camilla's heart; found that her whole conduct had been the result of delicacy and honest pride, and congratulated both my mother and himself on an alliance with so amiable a young woman.

Camilla said there was so much of romance, of mystery, and of the interposition of Providence in my life, that she thought it ought to be published for the good

good of society; but that my becoming a Fortune-teller was a truly master-stroke, and she knew not whether she ought to forgive me for punishing her folly with so much severity. Cordelia and her husband were invited to see us; but recollecting what I had said in the character of the Fortune-teller to that lady, I own I would gladly have been excused. She, however, contrived to spare my confusion, by calling the liberty I had taken with her a most singular obligation; as it not only restored her to her senses, but taught her to do justice to Mr. Molefworth's merit, the only man on earth she was convinced, whatever a childish inclination might have suggested to the contrary, that could have made her happy.

My Lord's steward, who had been so capital an instrument in the change in my affairs, recovered, though by slow degrees, listened with astonishment to the
tale

tale I told, and offered of himself to make his niece happy.

My grandfather ordered me, as the most important request he should ever make me, never to see or acknowledge my father: you have fortune sufficient, said he, without incurring favours from the contemptible, and may he live to repent! but he must never know the blessing of having a child:—conceiving, from his own paternal satisfaction, that that was the severest punishment he could inflict.

Mrs. Berkley, soon after the news of Camilla's marriage reached her, in a fit of spleen retired into the country, where her daughter and she passed their days together. The captain's regiment had been ordered abroad, but Lucinda was neither fit nor inclined to attend him, and dragged on a miserable existence, supported by her mother, in total obscurity.

My

My mother and my grandfather made many moral reflections on the vicissitudes we, their children, had experienced; pronounced my conduct an excellent satire on the age, and encouraged the publication of it as a mirror for fools, and a hint to the wise. Thus, then, it is presented; and may it be found useful, which is a still more valuable article than merely entertaining, to all ranks of people!

F I N I S.

FORTUNE TELLER.

My mother and my grandfather made many night reflections on the wisdom of us, their children, had experienced; pronounced my conduct an excellent fair on the age, and encouraged the publication of it as a mirror for fools, and a hint to the wise. Thus, then, it is preordained; and may it be found useful, which is a still more valuable article than merely entertaining, to all ranks of people!

FINIS.